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■ SUPER/C2
KC Concepcion writes on spilt milk, growing up, life's incoherencies



■ METRO/A21
2 explosions rock police compound in Pasig City; no one hurt

■ WORLD/A9
Former Soviet Union leaders ordered the hit on Pope John Paul II

Peso, financial markets euphoric over lifting of 1017

By Doris C. Dumla

AS EXPECTED, THE FINANCIAL MARKETS WERE euphoric over the lifting of the state of national emergency on Friday with the peso surging to a fresh three-and-a-half year high against the US dollar.

The peso opened at 51.20, hit an intra-day high of 51.14 before closing at 51.18 against the US currency, its highest finish since July 30,

PESO/A8

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UPLIFTING VIEW: A beaming President Arroyo is a portrait of confidence as she walks past the columns of Kalayaan Hall inside the Palace compound after announcing that she was lifting the state of national emergency. But she warned that she would not hesitate to use the full force of the law against those who would engage in "adventurism."

PCPD-MALACAÑANG

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO LIFTED the emergency rule she imposed exactly a week ago yesterday, claiming a "stronger" country. But she declared that she would not hesitate to act "with the same force of will and determination" if her opponents persisted in "inflicting instability on the nation and hurting our economy."

"I am happy to report that the cabal is broken and it is time to get back to the real business of governing. I am confident that order has been restored. Therefore, with the power vested in me by our Constitution, I declare that effective immediately, the state of emergency is no longer in effect," Ms Arroyo, dressed in a blue suit, said in a recorded speech aired on government TV/radio.

She signed Presidential Proclamation No. 1021 to lift the state of national emergency she had imposed through PP 1017.

But her men were also quick to say that the public could not rest easy just yet.

Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. said Ms Arroyo would not hesitate to again declare emergency rule should she decide there was "clear and present danger" to the government.

"It is a prerogative of the President under the Constitution that if there is clear and present danger to the national security, [she] can consider [reviving emergency rule]," Cruz told reporters, adding that it was the threat of an "armed attack" that prompted Ms Arroyo to declare a state of emergency on Feb. 24.

"The most important achievement of [PP] 1017 is the preemptive action, to prevent an armed attack against the government. Why should we wait until there is [one]? It's better to have preemptive and drastic measures so there is no opportunity for an armed attack against the government," he said.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno also said that

GMA LIFTS/A8

Crackdown continues

Editor, 2 columnists charged; more 'intimidations' feared

MORE THAN RELIEF, SKEPTICISM MARKED YESTERDAY'S lifting of Presidential Proclamation No. 1017, with various groups warning the people against letting down their guard.

Anticipating that President Macapagal-Arroyo would lift emergency rule, as her security advisers suggested on Friday, around 200 lawyers assembled in front of the IBP headquarters in Pasig City hours before she made the announcement.

"The price of democracy is a vigilant citizenry," said Joel Cadiz, national president of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines.

"If we sleep on our rights, this government will continue to trample on us. If 1017 is lifted, and we are repressed, that's still martial law. This is only paper. We want substance," he said.

Cadiz said that even if PP 1017 were lifted, "there could still be an absence of the freedom of assembly, warrantless arrests, and a threat [to] and intimidation [of] the media."

"We must continue to assert our rights," he declared.

Yesterday, the crackdown continued.

Hours after the President lifted PP 1017, charges were filed against the editor-publisher and two columnists of a newspaper for inciting to sedition.

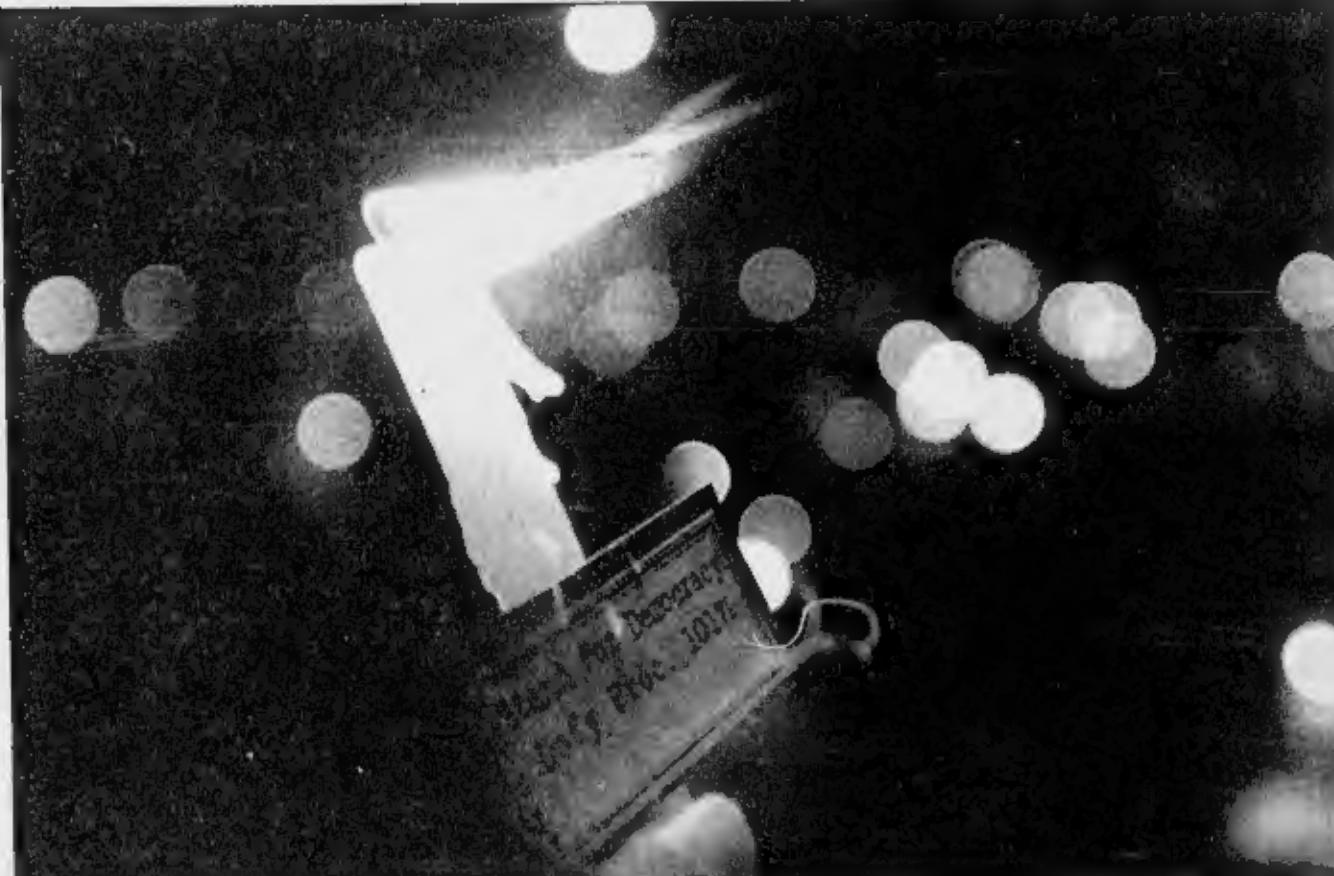
Charged at the Department of Justice were Ninez Cacho-Olivares, editor-in-chief and publisher of the Daily Tribune, and two of its columnists, Ike Señeres and Herman Thu-Laurel.

Among the evidence submitted to the DOJ were copies of their columns that allegedly contained seditious remarks, according to an officer of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group-National Capital Region.

The police's Directorate for Investigation has been reading their columns, and found "seditious statements" on them, the officer said.

"I'm not surprised," said Olivares, who said

CRACKDOWN/A8



THE FIGHT GOES ON: Anti-1017 protesters, and what it stood for, light candles to light their way through the 14 stations of the cross during the staging of the Kalbaryo ng Bayan (Nation's Calvary) at the La Salle Green Hills on Thursday. EDWIN BACASMAS

House-bound Batasan 5 still considered under arrest

By Norman Bordadora

THE MILITANT "BATASAN FIVE" CONGRESSMEN yesterday downplayed the lifting of the state of emergency, saying there was no reason for them to be complacent for as long as the threats of arrest hanged over their heads.

Casino and fellow Bayan Muna Representatives Sarur Ocampo and Joel Virador,

Anakpawis Rep. Rafael Mariano and Gabriela Rep. Liza Maza have been holed up inside the House complex for six days, enjoying protective custody in the face of a police threat to arrest them on charges of rebellion.

"As long as its constitutionality has yet to be decided, we can never be compla-

cent," Ocampo said, referring to Proclamation No. 1017, which President Macapagal-Arroyo rescinded yesterday.

Ocampo said the administration could always restore the emergency when it deemed fit.

A spokesperson for the Philippine Na-

HOUSE-BOUND/A8

Closure rites end search, start healing in St. Bernard

By Joey A. Gabieta, Jani Arnalz and Jhunex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau and Volt Contreras

GUINSAUGON, ST. BERNARD, Southern Leyte—With the defaced Mt. Kanabag as backdrop, a memorial service was held yesterday, 15 days after killer mudslides wiped out this farming village.

Southern Leyte Gov. Rosette Lleras, in an emotional speech, asked survivors of the tragedy "to accept God's will without question."

"We did everything possible. But now is the time for acceptance. Let us help each other and let us hold each other now that we may be able to rise from this difficult situation," she said during the four-hour ceremony.

The rites were held at the edge of the buried village that witnessed the death of 152 of its residents with over 900 people still missing and presumed dead.

CLOSURE/A20

NPA land mine kills 2 cops in Puerto Galera

By Luige A. del Puerto, Marion Ramos, Delfin Mallari Jr. and Marciano Virola Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

APPARENTLY STEPPING UP THEIR OFFENSIVE in the wake of President Macapagal-Arroyo's emergency declaration, communist rebels yesterday exploded a land mine and killed two police officers and a civilian in the resort town of Puerto Galera.

Three other policemen were wounded in the 6 a.m. attack carried out by 20 New People's Army guerrillas in Oriental Mindoro, police said.

Philippine National Police spokesperson



ON TOP OF THE WORLD: Romy Garduce leaves for Nepal on Friday.

JESVYSON

Veteran climber seeks to be 1st Pinoy on Everest

By Nikko Dizon

ACCOMPLISHED MOUNTAINEER ROMEO "Romy" Garduce left yesterday for Nepal on a quest to become the first Filipino to conquer Mt. Everest, the world's highest mountain peak.

Garduce is making the climb to test his limits, to benefit a charity and to instill national pride.

"I guess it's part of self-discovery. I keep on challenging myself," Garduce told reporters when asked why he embarked on such an ambitious goal.

He added: "This is the fourth time I am doing a Climb-for-a-Cause. Our countrymen can support my climb by donating to charity, by making a pledge every thousand feet."

Garduce was in high spirits as he pre-

pared to check in for his Thai Airways flight that would take him to Nepal via Bangkok.

"My bags already weigh 40 kilograms!" he exclaimed, laughing, as he tried to figure out where to put the extra pairs of socks, videocam films, brochures and other paraphernalia that his sponsors had given him.

Asked by the INQUIRER when he plans to return to the Philippines, Garduce replied in jest: "Me or my body?"

"My climb could either be successful or kapalit nito ang bulay ko (it could mean my life)," he said.

The thirtysomething systems analyst had mixed feelings about his Everest climb.

"Para kung sundalo na ipapadal sa giyera (You're like a soldier being sent off to war), I

VETERAN/A19

Campaign vs big-time smugglers has no funding, BOC tells Senate

By Leila B. Salaverría

IS GOVERNMENT SERIOUS IN THE campaign to nail down big-time smugglers?

Bureau of Customs Deputy Commissioner Celso Templo said lack of logistics has hampered investigations into the activities of suspected smugglers named in a recent senate hearing.

Templo, who heads the intelligence division, said he had asked for an outlay of P500,000 from Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales to finance the field work of his men, but was told the bureau has no funds.

The amount was to be used by agents to conduct surveillance operations and acquire communication equipment, said Templo.

"How can I conduct an investiga-

tion? We want to follow up the places to watch their actions, but we don't even have radios," he said.

Morales, however, said he has been scouting around for funds for the investigation.

He also said he would appeal to the Senate to approve the BOC's proposed budget.

In a recent hearing, senators directed Morales to investigate smuggling activities in the BOC which were allegedly spearheaded by people close to the President's family.

Without logistics, Templo said he and his legal team had resorted to just checking the records of the suspected smugglers named in a Senate hearing.

He said the team found no derogatory records on the suspects in the BOC, the police's Criminal Investiga-

tion and Detection Group or the military's intelligence service.

But Templo stressed that this was just the initial phase of the investigation.

He said the BOC still has to check the actual activities of the people on the list or of their companies.

That is not the final report. The final report will be released after the follow-up investigation," he said.

Templo said among the people included for background checking were Vicki Toh, Samyung Lee and Lucio Lao Co. Toh and Co allegedly have close ties to the first family.

President Macapagal-Arroyo has earlier ordered finance and customs officials to go after the people who drop the name of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo to facilitate their dealings with the BOC.

Japan gives P27.5M to build homes for Leyte slide victims

TOKYO — JAPAN WILL DONATE US\$335,715 (P27,417,893) to the Philippines to build shelters for people who lost their homes in a killer landslide that struck a village in St. Bernard, Southern Leyte last month, the Foreign Ministry said Friday.

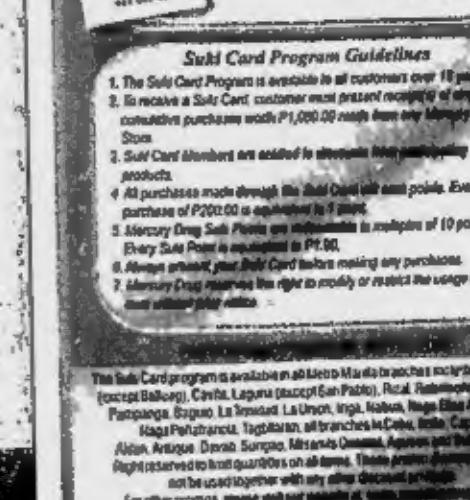
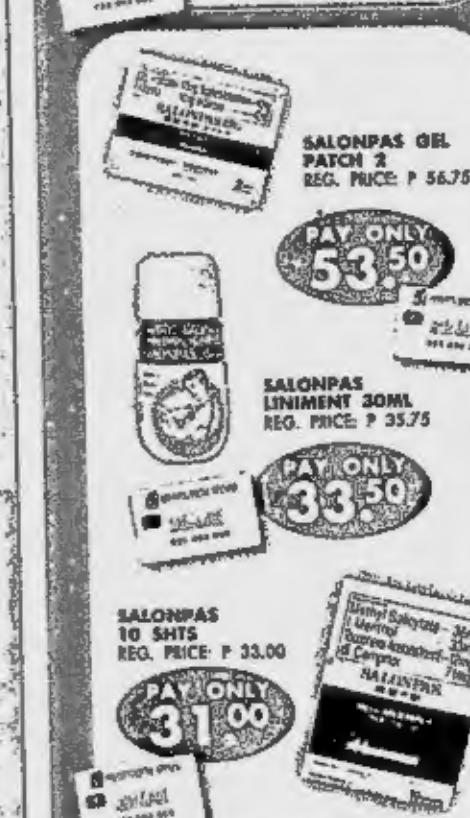
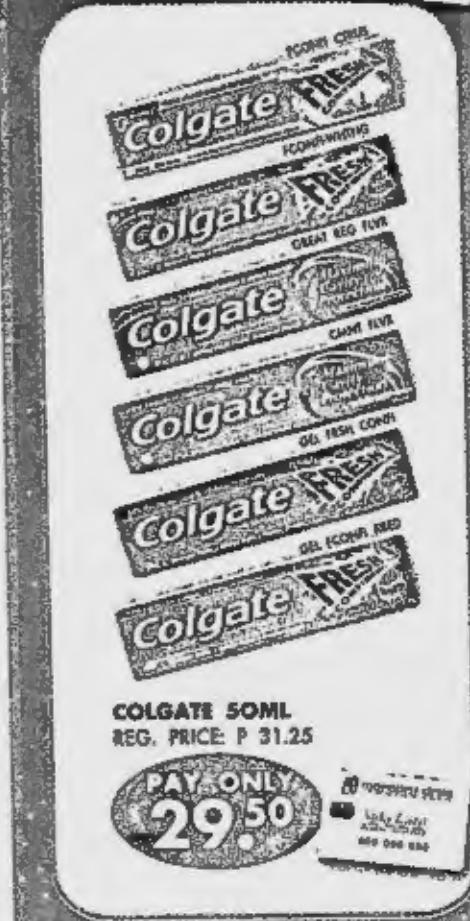
The aid comes on top of previous donations of tents and blankets and the dispatch of several disaster recovering teams.

"Those who have lost their houses and properties in the landslide disaster area are now forced to stay in a seriously harmful situation without clear prospects for the future," the Foreign Ministry said in a release.

On Thursday, Philippine authorities officially ended the search for bodies in the village of Guinsaugon, which was entombed by a wall of mud, boulders and trees from the collapse of a nearby mountainside on Feb. 17.

About 140 bodies have been retrieved, and 972 people are still missing and feared dead. More than 3,000 were left homeless. APP

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A matter of 'national security,' says Cruz

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

CLAIMING IT WAS A MATTER OF "national security," Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. said it was solely up to President Macapagal-Arroyo to decide whether to make public the findings of a fact-finding body on the military's alleged involvement in rigging the 2004 elections.

The usually unflappable Cruz, a lawyer by profession, yesterday nearly lost his cool at reporters who asked why the report submitted by the former Armed Forces Inspector General and now the Navy chief, Vice Admiral Mateo Mayuga months ago has not been released.

The "Hello Garci" scandal is believed to be at the crux of the unrest in the military after the alleged wiretapped conversations between Ms Arroyo and ex-elections commissioner Virgilio Garcillano gave rise to allegations of election cheating involving top military officials.

Sen. Rodolfo Blazon, a former military chief, said Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim and Col. Ariel Querubin who reportedly planned to withdraw support from the President during the weekend were among the officers who came to see him last July 2 protesting the inaction of the AFP top brass on those officials implicated in the scandal.

The issue of election fraud was also raised during the six-hour standoff at the Marines headquarters Sunday sparked by the sudden relief of Marine commander Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda.

I'll quit if GMA is tied to fertilizer scam – PGAC chair

By Nelson F. Flores

PRESIDENTIAL ANTI-GRAFT Commission Chair Constance de Guzman said yesterday she would resign from her post if investigations showed that President Macapagal-Arroyo was involved in the alleged multi-million peso fertilizer scam.

In a press conference, De Guzman said she believes in Ms Ar-

SNEAK PREVIEW

Palace video shows 'left-right' conspiracy

By Christine O. Avendaño

MALACAÑANG HAS PRODUCED and was expected to show on nationwide television last night a short video documentary disclosing what it claimed was a conspiracy among elements from the right, left and the opposition to overthrow the Arroyo government.

The 12.5-minute documentary was scheduled to be aired at 7 p.m. last night over government television station NBN 4 but Malacañang reporters were given a "sneak preview" yesterday.

The Palace felt compelled to present its case in the documentary after President Macapagal-Arroyo lifted the state of national emergency yesterday, a week after its imposition Feb. 24.

"We want people to be enlightened about what's happening in the country, about what happened last Friday and Sunday, and the continued conspiracy between the left and the right," the President's Chief of Staff Michael Defensor said after the showing of the documentary at the Palace press briefing room.

President Arroyo declared a state of national emergency after military officials disclosed they had taken under custody Gen. Danilo Lim of the Scout Ranger Regiment who had planned to march with his unit to the EDSA 1 commemoration rallies as part of a plot to overthrow the government.

Two days later, a military standoff gripped Manila in suspense and tension after 1st Marine Brigade commander Col. Ariel Querubin and his men milled around the Philippine

Marines headquarters in Makati City in protest over the relief of Marine commandant Gen. Miranda. Violence was averted and the confrontation resolved in favor of the government after seven hours, with authorities turning away politicians and other groups attempting to replicate a "people power" gathering.

In lifting the state of emergency, the President apparently was persuaded by the assessment of her security officials that threat to the national security had subsided.

Defensor said the production and showing of the documentary was recommended by the National Security Council, and that additionally, the Palace wanted to take a "proactive role to campaign strongly against the communist movement."

"What's important here is for the people to see the potential trouble that this kind of alliance would create and the continued campaign of the government against the left and the adventurous right," he told reporters.

Present in the showing of the documentary were Defensor, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga, Navy chief Vice Adm. Mateo Mayuga and Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye.

The documentary related that Senga and Army chief Gen. Hermogenes Esperon were the ones who disclosed the alleged conspiracy of the Communist Party of the Philippines-New Peoples Army and the mutinous Magdalo Group of military officers to oust President Arroyo.

It revealed the participation in the conspiracy of Lim, Querubin



AFP CHIEF of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga and Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita watch with members of the Palace press the showing Friday of "Paglaban sa Kataksilan 1017," a documentary prepared by Malacañang.

LYN ELLEN



FORMER congressman Peping Cojuangco tells acting NBI chief Nestor Mantaring he was not involved in a recent plot to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo.

PDI PHOTO

Peping goes to NBI, denies part in coup plot

By Margaux C. Ortiz

FORMER TARLAC CONGRESSMAN Jose "Peping" Cojuangco yesterday denied that there was a plot to launch a coup d'etat during a gathering at his Dasmarinas home last Feb. 24.

In a letter addressed to Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno last Feb. 27 which he also submitted to National Bureau of Investigation officer in charge Nestor Mantaring, Cojuangco said: "There was a gathering. There was an effort to gather information. There were expressions of concern. But definitely, there was no plotting."

Cojuangco appeared at the NBI yesterday after he was invited to shed light on the Time Asia magazine article implicating him and Council on Philippine Affairs (COPA) secretary general Pastor "Boy" Saycon in a foiled coup plot last week.

The chair of the Philippine Olympic Committee said he invited Saycon and a few other people to finalize plans for the Feb. 25 dinner that he would be hosting in commemoration of the People Power Revolution.

In his letter, Cojuangco said they were also supposed to discuss the Gawad Kalinga event that would honor the Philippine medalists during the recent Southeast Asian Games.

He explained that both he and Saycon received concerned phone calls asking about "coup plots in the offing" when the meeting began.

While Saycon took the initiative to check out the reports, Cojuangco said he suggested that the callers drop by his residence so he "could share" with them "any information that would come his way."

Cojuangco said that at one point during the gathering, Saycon advised him and the other visitors that he would be calling a certain Delta - who turned out to be Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim.

"I remember the voice at the other end saying that there was nothing definite but that he would advise Mr. Saycon if he learned anything more," Cojuangco said, explaining that Saycon had turned on the speaker device of his cell phone so that everyone would hear what Lim had to say.

The former congressman said the visitors started to thin out after "no further information could be gathered that evening."

As for Time Asia correspondent Nelly Sindayen, Cojuangco confirmed she was present during the meeting.

"She was there as Saycon's guest," he said.

Mantaring told reporters that they were able to confirm with Cojuangco that there was indeed a gathering on Feb. 23.

"He said that aside from preparing for the People Power dinner and the Gawad Kalinga event, he also met with a group of cockfighting that night," Mantaring said.

While Cojuangco promptly responded to the NBI's invitation, Saycon declined to do so, opting to give a letter of explanation which he earlier submitted to Puno.

"Considering the chilling effect of the declaration of state of emergency, Mr. Saycon deemed it prudent and wise to decline your invitation since this kind of invitation is reminiscent of the martial law type [of invitation] that he experienced during the martial law regime," Saycon's lawyer Marc Anthony Antonio said in a letter to Mantaring.

Corrections

IN THE STORY "Nañagas quits as DBP proxy" on Page B2 of yesterday's issue, Vitaliano Nañagas II was wrongly identified as president of the Development Bank of the Philippines. He is chairman of the DBP.

IN THE Feb. 27 issue, a story on Page B2-1—"Déjà vu on Ayala"—misstated the date of burial of former Sen. Benigno Aquino. Aquino was buried on Aug. 31, 1983—not 1986.

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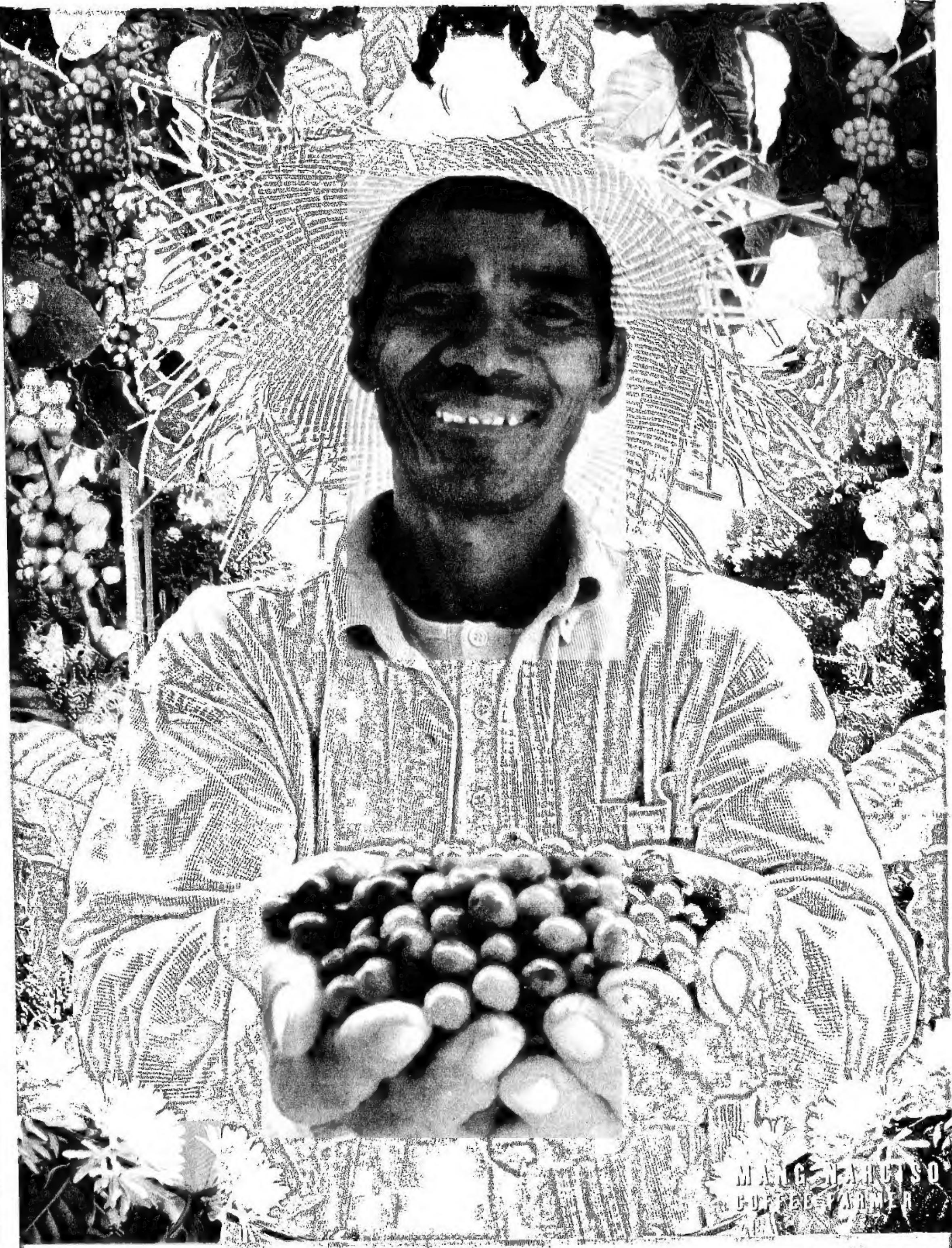
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MARI, ROSELYN B.
MARIANO, MARVIN V.
MARITTA, IMELDA H.
MARTY, JASON M.
MAURICIO, CARLA P.
MAZON, WENDY MARIA G.
MEDINA, JEROME O.
MELVINA, LEAH B.
MENDEZ, KAREN J.
MENDOZA, BERNADETTE C.
MENDOZA, MARK THOMAS T.
MENZON, MARSEL R.
MINGOA, JILLIAN G.
MOLINA, ANNA KRISTINE B.
MONDARES, JED DEHITI A.
MONGE, JULIE MARIE A.
MONSALUD, MARICEL S.
MONTEVERGEN, RICHARD C.
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MORA, LAWRENCE ANTHONY L.
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MORATO, CHERYL B.
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OLIVAS, VIVIAN JOY S.
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PEREZ, KAROL LEONIA T.
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PULIDO, JANE M.
PULMANO, COLIN JASON L.
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UY, SHEILA MARIE O.
VALENZUGA, MAYETTE D.
VALIENTE, MARIBEL
VALIARTA, CESAR JR. P.
VALMORES, TERENCE WARREN G.
VIA, MARIA PHELMA L.
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TAKING the lead through innovative and pioneering initiatives in protecting and conserving the environment, rehabilitating damaged and ravaged natural resources and striking a balance in the utilization and propagation of its land, water and coastal resources through a dynamic sustainable development policy, had earned Puerto Princesa City international and local recognition. All these could not have been possible without the wholehearted and strong support of its constituents and the dedicated and persevering efforts of city officials and employees, especially those manning the frontlines against forest, marine resource and wildlife destruction. Among those noteworthy achievements include the following:

The **FIRST** city to have made environmental protection as the centerpiece of local governance in line with its sustainable development objectives. Thus, earning the honor of being the **FIRST** local government unit in the country to receive the UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL 500 ROLL OF HONOR AWARD from UNEP Executive Director Elizabeth Dowdeswell in Seoul, Korea during the World Environment Day celebration. For his pioneering spirit, dedication and commitment in making environmental protection and sustainable development the nucleus of his administration Mayor Edward S. Hagedorn was the **FIRST** Filipino political leader to receive the award.

The **FIRST** city to receive the GRAND MACL-ING DULAG ENVIRONMENTAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS given by the Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation (RCBC) and the Rotary Club of Makati. Puerto Princesa City was chosen as the most environmentally-conscious and active LGU at the time.

The **FIRST** component city to receive the AWARD OF EXCELLENCE AS THE CLEANEST AND GREENEST COMPONENT CITY IN THE PHILIPPINES (1994) and the NATIONAL HALL OF FAME AWARD (1996) for winning the "Cleanest and Greenest Component City Award" for three consecutive years (1994-96). The city's innovative approach under its Clean and Green program has since been emulated by other local government units.

The **FIRST** LGU to receive the prestigious DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT AWARD OF ASIA by the Asian Institute of Management (AIM) in cooperation with the Far Eastern Economic Review and the Management Association of the Philippines.



On its 134th Founding Anniversary

Puerto Princesa City inaugurates RP's first integrated sanitary landfill and waste water treatment facility

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY marks today its 134th foundation day with the inauguration of the country's first state-of-the-art, integrated sanitary landfill and waste water treatment facility that is owned and operated by a local government unit.

Located in Barangay Santa Lourdes, the sanitary landfill and waste water treatment project sits in a 35 hectare environmentally-controlled area which was once an abandoned mining site. The pioneering and innovative project was jointly undertaken with financial support extended by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG).

The P300-million state-of-the art solid waste landfill and waste water treatment project is the first to fully comply with Republic Act 9003 or the Solid Waste Management Act of 2003.

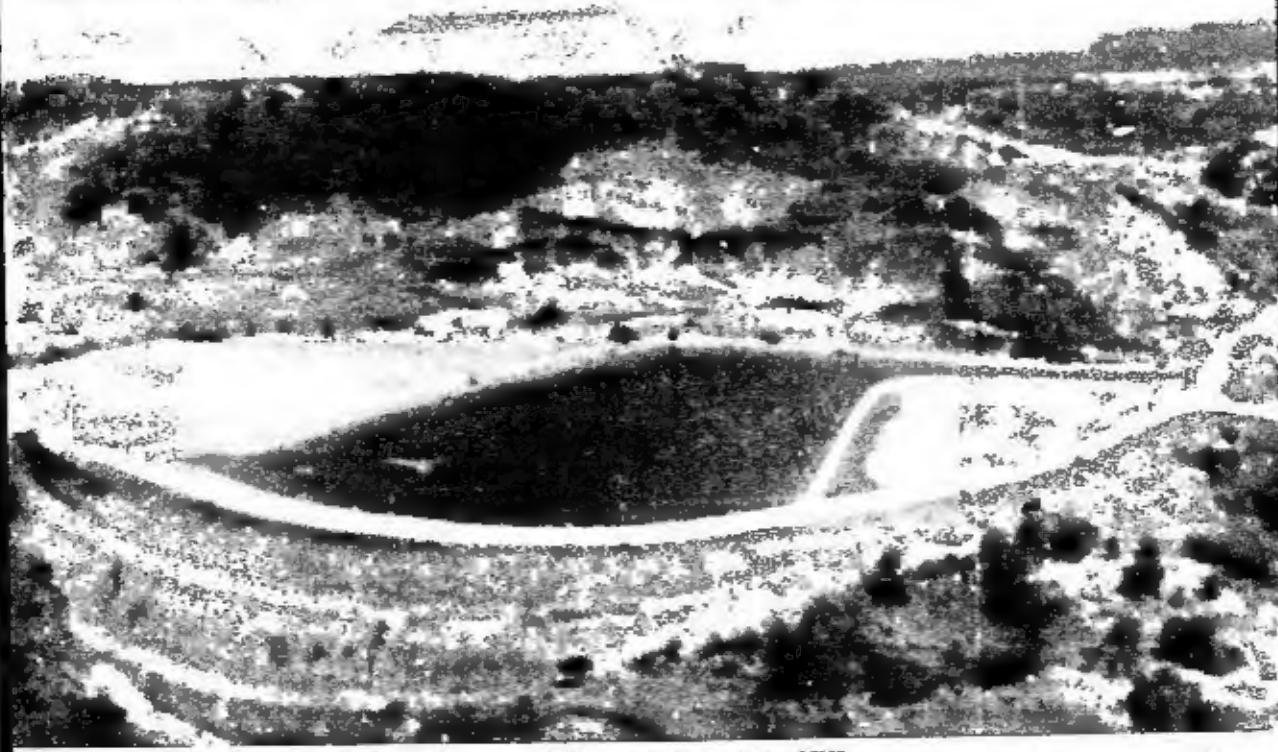
Mayor Edward S. Hagedorn said "the city government and the people of Puerto Princesa City are very happy to be inaugurating today



Waste water treatment facility

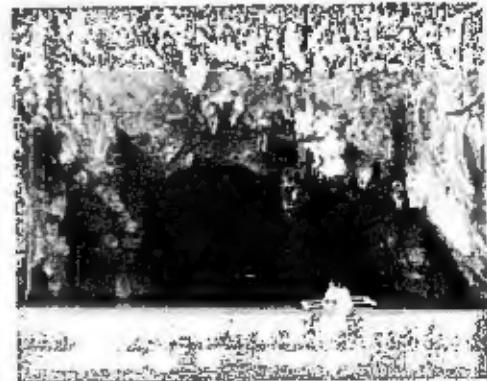
such a landmark environmental protection and conservation facility. It is a fitting tribute to the 134th Foundation Day of our beloved city."

"This project took years to plan and implement. It represents the foresight, forward planning, commitment and perseverance of a local government unit and its constituents who are committed to protect, conserve, rehabilitate, sustain and develop its finite natural resources for future generations to come," Hagedorn said.

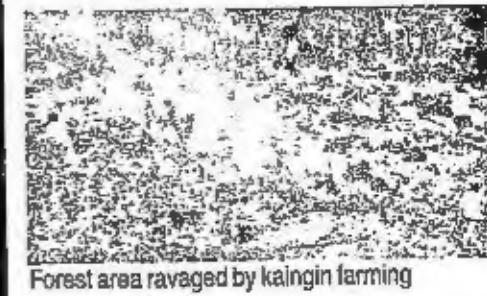


Bird's eye view of Puerto Princesa City sanitary landfill

The **FIRST** LGU to be given management control and authority over a national park - the Saint Paul Subterranean River National Park (the world's longest underground river) by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. After six years of local government management and control, the national park was renamed PUERTO PRINCESA SUBTERRANEAN RIVER NATIONAL PARK and was named by the UNESCO as a World Heritage site.



The **FIRST** LGU outside of Metro Manila to establish and maintain a Cyanide Detection Test Laboratory to prevent cyanide fishing which permanently destroys precious coral reefs which support marine life and ensure that no fish or marine products caught through the illegal use of sodium cyanide is sold to the public. This facility has enabled the city to stop once rampant, organized illegal trade in live tropical fishes.



Forest area ravaged by kaingin farming

The **FIRST** LGU to declare a STATE OF CALAMITY which paved the way for the passage of Republic Act 8185, which gives authority to LGUs to declare a state of calamity should the need arises. Mayor Edward Hagedorn early on his term issued a State of Calamity in the city in order to eradicate rampant *kaingin* or slash and burn farming that had destroyed and denuded large tracts of virgin forests in the city. Through the unprecedented legal move, Mayor Hagedorn undertook a holistic program that weaned away *kaingin* farmers from their illegal and destructive practices and turned them into enlightened, productive farmers under the city's agricultural and farming support programs.



The **FIRST** LGU to develop and implement a comprehensive and intensive reforestation program within all watersheds in its jurisdiction. As a result, Puerto Princesa City is the first LGU to have distinction of being given authority and control over national watersheds by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). With control and authority over watersheds under the city government, the city has since launched a series of highly successful innovative reforestation programs like its annual *Pista Y Ang Kageban* or Feast of the Forests to replant denuded watersheds in the city and its "Love Affair with Nature" program every Valentine's Day to replant, propagate and expand its mangrove stock in coastal barangays. To date, the city has replanted a total of 1.5 million trees and protected and significantly expanded the hectare of its threatened and diminishing mangrove plantations through the years.



"Protect what is there, rehabilitate what has been destroyed and plan for intelligent, sustainable resource utilization." - **MAYOR EDWARD S. HAGEDORN**

Saudi prince pardons 50 Pinays held in jail for minor offenses

By Jerome Aning

FIFTY FILIPINAS IN SAUDI ARABIAN JAILS for minor offenses have been granted royal pardon and would be repatriated to the Philippines in two weeks, Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas disclosed yesterday.

Sto. Tomas, who was in Saudi Arabia last weekend, said the governor of Riyadh Province, Prince Salman bin Abul Aziz, approved the pardons as a gesture of goodwill to the Arroyo administration and the Philippine celebration of the National Women's Month.

Sto. Tomas said 14 other overseas Filipino workers serving time in Kuwaiti jails have also been pardoned and freed late February during the emirate's celebration of its liberation from Iraqi invading forces during the First Gulf War.

The OFWs were serving prison terms for cultural offenses, such as bringing in religious articles, possession of alcoholic drink, and "love crimes," the labor secretary told reporters.

Last January, Salman granted amnesty to dozens of OFWs detained at Riyadh's airport for violation of the kingdom's immigration laws. The prince also paid for the trip back to the Philippines.

At least 350 more OFWs are languishing in Saudi Arabia jails for other crimes.

Japanese travel execs to visit RP

By Jerome Aning

TOP EXECUTIVES OF JAPAN'S BIG TRAVEL firms will arrive in Manila this month as the Department of Tourism intensifies its campaign to attract more Japanese tourists, the number of which has been overtaken by South Koreans in the past months.

Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano said Eiji Abe of Kamome Tours and Yasuhiro Yamazaki of Royce Confect Co. Ltd., together with wholesale agents and media representatives will be in the country by mid-March.

Abe and Yokohama municipal board members will be in Manila on Mar. 28-29, while Yamazaki will visit Manila and Cebu on Mar. 15-25.

Durano said the DOT promotion drive in Japan will be tapping golfers, drivers and war memorial visitors to boost tourist arrivals.

At least 115 Japanese will comprise the KNT Izokukai tour group who will visit war memorial sites all over the Philippines from Mar. 2-5. They will travel to Tacloban, Davao, Cebu, Subic, Clark, Batasan, and Corregidor.

Likewise, 10 wholesale travel agents and media representatives from Tokyo are scheduled for a familiarization tour of El Nido and Manila on Mar. 3-6, focusing on activities that can be included in their sales packages.

A group of 10 top-level wholesale executives will be treated to a golf familiarization tour in Davao on Mar. 10-12.

"All of them will market our tourism destinations, products and services in Japan," Durano said, noting the slow but consistent increase of Japanese arrivals to the Philippines since 2004.

The number of tourist arrivals from Japan, which used to be the Philippines' number one market aside from the United States, has been surpassed in the past two years by South Korea.

DOT's January data showed that Japan has slid to third among the country's top 12 markets, with only 41,014 visitors compared to Korea's 58,583 and the US' 53,225. In terms of growth rate, Japanese arrivals posted only 12.5 percent compared to Korea's 29.8 percent and US' 8.6 percent.

THE DAILY GOSPEL



Saturday, March 4, 2006
Saturday, After Ash Wednesday

Casimir

1st Reading: 58:9-14

Gospel: Luke 5:27-32

Jesus noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax office, he said to him, "Follow me." So Levi, leaving everything, got up and followed Jesus.

Levi gave a great feast for Jesus, and many tax collectors came to his house and took their place at table with the other people. Then the Pharisees and their fellow teachers complained to Jesus' disciples, "How is it that you eat and drink with tax collectors and other sinners?" But Jesus spoke up, "Healthy people don't need a doctor, but sick people do. I have come to call to repentance; I call sinners, not the righteous."

Commentary

Isaiah is clear about the practices of Lent: no lying, no malicious speech, bestow (gift) the hungry with your bread, and satisfy the afflicted giving what they lack. Then we will know the presence of God as light, guidance, strength, and as what waters us deeply. We will all be rebuilt and restored. But we must truly worship and make every day—not only the Sabbath—a day that is holy. We are sinners, all of us, like Matthew the tax collector, but we are invited home. We are called to stop being self-righteous and disobedient, and turn our hearts and lives towards the Body of Christ, the children of God, and follow Jesus as we once promised at our baptism. Together we must walk Lent behind the Crucified One.

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Dito sa Jollibee,
bida ang sarap!

GMA lifts state of emergency but ...

From page A1

While the general public may relax with the lifting of PP 1017, the administration's enemies may not.

"It's a message to everyone that we can all relax and get on with our lives," Puno said in a text message to the Inquirer.

"But the [Department of Interior and Local Government] and the [Philippine National Police] will remain vigilant because while the threat to the government has been resolved, there are still continuing threats to public order and safety from misguided elements in society," he said.

"We should also remind everyone that the laws against rebellion and sedition continue to be in force," he added.

US pressure

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said it was pressure from the US government that led Ms Arroyo to lift PP 1017.

Pimentel said the visit of US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill might have made the President do it, as well as the statement of the American Chamber of Commerce calling for an end to emergency rule.

He said the United States wanted things to go back to normal so that businesses would not be too affected.

"[PP] 1017 is bad for business. How can good business flourish in a state of emergency? This is realpolitik."

Obviously, she's trying to please America, knowing the tremendous clout it exercises in this country," Pimentel said, adding:

"Gloria is a straw lady of the Americans."

The US Embassy in Manila, through press attaché Matthew Lussenhop, said that it "welcomed" the President's declaration and that it was now "looking forward to a deeper cooperation" with the Philippine government on various bilateral concerns.

Reached on the phone shortly after PP 1021 was issued, Lussenhop declined to comment on perceptions that Ms Arroyo's meeting on Tuesday with Hill might have influenced her into ending emergency rule, which the US Embassy said it had been "closely monitoring."

Lussenhop said the embassy had nothing more to add to statements made by Hill, who maintained that the US government regarded the political crisis as something Filipinos could resolve by themselves in a democratic context.

Success

The President claimed success in fixing the economy, which she said was the reason for her election.

She appealed to her "political opponents and opportunists to stop undermining our economy at home and embarrassing the

nation abroad with their cheap political antics."

She said the events in the last seven days had validated her "judgment call" to declare a state of emergency and implement it for one week even though her economic advisers had told her to lift it as early as Saturday and Sunday last week.

"My concerns were subsequently borne out: We have arrested scores of destabilizers and several military personnel. We have documented case by case and in specific detail the transgressions for which they now stand accused. And as you saw play out last Sunday night, the struggle continued through the weekend. As such, I kept in place the SOE (state of emergency) until I was sure the nation was safe and sound," she said.

Ms Arroyo took pains to justify her decision, saying she empathized with those who were spooked by the warrantless arrests and the perceived crackdown on the media.

"It was not an action I took lightly, but I felt too much was at stake to do anything less," she said.

Thanks

"I believe my actions strengthened and protected our civil liberties and free press and maintained the economic gains we have fought so hard to secure. Our nation is stronger for dealing quickly and decisively with this issue," she added.

Ms Arroyo thanked the mili-

tary for "withstanding the political gamesmanship," the local and national government leaders "who stood by the side of democracy," and the people "who understand that the best way to a bright future is through hard work, not talking to the streets."

She thanked the PNP and the Armed Forces for remaining loyal to the chain of command, adding that persons who had plotted to overthrow her administration would face the full force of the law.

At noon yesterday, the PNP further downgraded its alert level to normal alert, meaning the work of the 118,000-strong police force will again be governed by a three-shift system.

Senior Supt. Samuel Pagdilao, PNP spokesperson, also announced at a press conference the lifting of the suspension of the permit to carry firearms, a special privilege given to registered gun holders facing threats to their lives.

And in another sign that things were normalizing, the PNP said it would now be up to media organizations to police their own ranks, particularly on the issue of printing or airing what might be deemed "seditious remarks."

But troops deployed to television stations were not pulled out.

"Not at the moment. They still remain in place," said the spokesperson of the AFP's National Capital Region Command

[INCRCom], Capt. Ramon Zagala.

"The troops will remain in place and we are still on red alert. We have recommended to higher authorities to downgrade it to blue alert, but the guidance is to remain in place," Zagala said.

Split decision

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez described as a "split decision" the outcome of Ms Arroyo's first serious bout with the media following the issuance of PP 1017 last Feb. 24.

After a week of implementing the edict that Sen. Joker Arroyo had said was directed at the media, Gonzalez said one of the lessons learned was that the media would fight it out even amid threat of arrest and the takeover and closure of media offices.

"The media will always fight for their own survival. You cannot remove the feeling of invulnerability," Gonzalez said in an interview following the lifting of PP 1017.

Still, Gonzalez—one of the framers of the controversial edict—said he believed that the government had succeeded in its objective to stop the media from supposedly allowing themselves to be used by antigovernment forces.

"I think it has some sobering effect," Gonzalez said when asked whether PP 1017 had been effective when applied to the media.

"Even the most critical media had started to reexamine their

policies," he said, adding that PP 1017, like all laws, had the effect of "sowing fear" among the people.

Asked what prompted the Palace to withdraw the edict, Gonzalez said: "We lifted it at our own pleasure."

But he said that despite the lifting of PP 1017, the government would continue to monitor the media for grounds to press charges of inciting to sedition.

He said warrantless arrests, if done when a crime was committed, about to be committed or in pursuit of a fugitive from justice, would continue according to the basic laws of the land.

He said the same went for the prohibition of rallies without permits or those marred by violence.

Wolf under the bed

Gonzalez said the government was ready to reimpose a state of emergency when the need arose.

"We can always impose it tomorrow," he said.

For now, he said, the government would remain vigilant even if the situation seemed to have "simmered down."

"You lift this state of emergency and you all go to sleep," he said. "We have to be more vigilant now. We may wake one morning with the wolf under our bed."

With reports from Luige A. del Puerto, Armand N. Nocum, Norman Bordadora, Philip C. Tuba and Dona Z. Passibugan

Peso, financial markets euphoric over lifting of 1017

From page A1

2002. It was averaging 51.187 to the dollar at midday.

"The lifting of the state of emergency is a clear signal that the threats against the government have been neutralized more so this would boost financial markets, particularly the peso," said Jonathan Ravelas, chief strategist of Banco de Oro Universal Bank.

But the formal lifting of Presidential Proclamation No. 1017, which was announced shortly before the equities market closed, failed to boost local stocks.

Traders said the market was due for a correction after four days of gains, as investors had taken account of the planned lifting of the state of emergency.

Share prices closed 0.34 percent lower Friday on profit-taking. The composite index slipped 7.24 points to 2,130.37.

On a roll

The peso had rallied for the fifth straight session after the weekend's political tension and gained another 4 centavos yesterday from Thursday's close of 51.22.

The local currency was also invigorated by the strengthening of Asian currencies, particularly the Japanese yen and Chinese yuan.

But news about two blasts in Pasig City before noon tempered the peso's further ascent. It slipped to 51.27 but rallied after President Macapagal-Arroyo lifted the emergency rule she imposed last week. (See story on Page A1.)

Traders, however, said the currency was still on a roll and could soon break the next psychological barrier at 51:\$1.

"The peso is likely to test the 51:\$1 levels as early as next week," Ravelas said.

Once the 51:\$1 barrier was breached, Ravelas said the market would next target 50.50 against the greenback, especially in April and May when remittances from overseas Filipino workers pour in time for the schoolyear opening in June.

By the month's end, Ravelas said the peso would also benefit from the repatriation of residents' first quarter windfall from overseas investments.

Hot money

Strong inflows of "hot money" or foreign investments in local stocks, bonds and bank products starting February have also fueled the peso's rise against the US dollar.

Net portfolio investments

hit an 11-month high of \$515.3 million for the month of February, reversing the outflow of \$117 million in January and replicating the strong windfall in early 2005 before the "jueteng" and "Hello Garci" scandals erupted.

The windfall in February was the highest monthly net inflow of portfolio investments reported by the BSP since January last year when the inflows amounted to \$543.5 million.

BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said it was possible that the strong portfolio inflows last year, which reached over \$2 billion, could be replicated this year despite expectations that fixed income instruments may not match last year's strong performance.

He said foreign funds would only likely shift to local stocks from fixed income on expectation that stocks would outperform bonds this year.

Boosting confidence

Analysts said share prices should bounce back next week after Ms Arroyo gave up emergency powers she assumed to deal with alleged coup threats.

The lifting of the state of emergency should further boost investor confidence as it suggests that the security situation is now stable. The market is also convinced that the economic fundamentals remain strong," said Astro del Castillo of First Grade Holdings.

Ms Arroyo imposed the state of emergency on Feb. 24 amid reports that military rebels, communist guerrillas and opposition figures were allegedly planning a coup.

Ms Arroyo's lifting of the state of emergency on Friday "should restore some normalcy. Hopefully we can sustain the rally" next week, added Oliver Plana of Asiatic Equities.

Corporate reports are still expected to come out next week. Hopefully, that will still give the market some direction," he added.

For the week ending March 3, the composite index rose 2.9 percent or 60.44 points to 2,130.37 points.

Average daily turnover slipped to 821.2 million shares but value rose to P1.335 billion from 844.2 million shares worth P1.214 billion the previous week.

Ms Arroyo's action "would improve confidence in the country," said Jovis Vistan of AB Capital, remarking that the peso had strengthened in reaction to the lifting of the state of emergency.

With a report from AFP

Crackdown continues

From page A1

she has not yet been officially informed of the charges. "They have been talking about this."

Threats will continue'

Other journalists expressed skepticism at the turn of events.

Carlos Conde, secretary general of the National Union of Journalists in the Philippines, said attempts to curtail press freedom would continue.

"Ms Arroyo will do everything to stay in power even with the lifting of PP 1017," Conde said.

"We have to strengthen our force because while the Arroyo administration remains questionable, while her stay in Malacañang is being clouded by doubt, threats will continue," he said.

Maximo Solis, station manager of RMN radio dxDC, said the lifting was part of government moves that the public should be vigilant about.

"We are in a situation that should prompt us to be on guard always," he said.

The militant labor alliance Kilusang Mayo Uno also advised "freedom lovers" to "maintain vigilance."

"The revocation [of PP 1017] was done merely in words, not in deeds. The attack on people's rights will continue to intensify," KMU national chair Elmer Labog said in a statement.

Too hot to handle

Labog claimed that emergency rule was lifted because "it was too hot to handle," with "militant groups, the media, lawyers, lawmakers and the public bond[ing] versus the Marcosian tactic."

He said the President's act only served as "a veil to obfuscate the intensifying suppression of the people's democratic, civil and political rights."

Other militant groups said that unless the government truly stopped the clampdown on dissent, an emergency state remained in effect.

"The proof of the pudding is in the eating," Sanlakas president Wilson Forcaliza said, recalling how the dictator Ferdinand Marcos lifted martial law in 1981 although military rule remained well until his ouster in 1986.

Bangon Alyansang Makabayan secretary general Renato Reyes Jr. said: "The true test of the lifting of emergency rule will be if measures like General Order No. 5, warrantless arrests, guidelines for the media and the dispersal of rallies are also junked."

The lifting should be complete, and not "nominal," Reyes said.

Laban ng Masa chair Francisco Nemenzo Jr. said widespread opposition to PP 1017 and the threats it posed to civil liberties was crucial to Ms Arroyo's decision to lift it.

But "she is not yet off the hook," Nemenzo warned, saying the crisis of legitimacy confronting the administration had actually worsened.

"Even if PP 1017 has been lifted, Ms Arroyo's crimes against the people persist. The crime of plunder, deception and lying continues," said Akbayan president Ronald Llamas.

He said what the nation needed was not the lifting of the state of emergency but Ms Arroyo's exit.

Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas leader Danilo Ramos said the lifting was probably intended to preempt an eventual Supreme Court ruling that PP 1017 was unconstitutional.

The ultimate purpose of PP 1017 was not achieved, which is to frighten anti-Arroyo

critics into inaction," he said.

Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said the chamber would proceed with its investigation of alleged abuses committed during the state of national emergency, including the police raid on the Daily Tribune newspaper and the warrantless arrests.

"We cannot simply gloss over these violations, if established, because to do so would send the signal to the government that it can do as it pleases regardless of what the Constitution says," Pangilinan said.

The Senate approved early this week Resolution No. 461 calling for an inquiry into government actions that allegedly violated fundamental freedoms. The resolution was introduced by 17 senators.

"Now more than ever, the Senate must act as a check and balance to the executive. We will not shirk this constitutional duty," Pangilinan said.

Former Sen. Loren Legarda said the people, particularly members of the media, were still jittery despite the lifting of the proclamation.

She said its after-effects would continue to linger, "like a festering wound that would take a long time to heal."

"[A state of emergency] should not have been declared, in the first place," Legarda said, adding that the root cause of the issue was the questioned legitimacy of the President's administration as a result of the alleged election fraud in 2004.

"The issue is illegitimacy, which cannot be swept under the rug," she stressed.

Out of the Tribune

Policemen yesterday pulled out of the premises of the Tribune's editorial office in Manila.

Insp. Jonathan Pabilio of the Police Community Relations Group-Camp Crame, who was among the policemen assigned to guard the Tribune office, said they received the pull-out order from their headquarters at around 1 p.m., or about an hour and a half after Ms Arroyo announced the lifting of PP 10

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

The WORLD

Soviet leadership ordered John Paul II hit, says panel

ROME—LEADERS OF THE FORMER Soviet Union ordered the assassination bid on Pope John Paul II in 1981, the head of an Italian parliamentary commission announced Thursday.

Sen. Paolo Guzzanti said the findings of the commission showed "beyond all reasonable doubt" that Moscow's military secret service, the GRU, was responsible for the shooting as the late Pope greeted pilgrims in St. Peter's Square.

The assertion, for years a favorite of conspiracy theorists in Italy, reopened old Cold War wounds but prompted an immediate denial from Moscow's post-Soviet secret service, who dismissed it as "totally absurd."

"This commission believes, beyond all reasonable doubt, that the leaders of the USSR took the initiative to eliminate Pope Karol Woytila and that they communicated this decision to the military secret service ... to commit a crime of unique gravity, without equal in modern history," according to a draft made available to journalists.

The conclusions were contained in a chapter of the report by the Mitrokhin Commission, set up by the Italian parliament to investigate Cold War secrets revealed by Vasili Mitrokhin, a Soviet archivist who defected to the West in 1992.

Turkish hitman Ali Agca shot and seriously wounded John Paul II in St. Peter's Square on May 13, 1981.

Agca, who was overpowered seconds after the attack, was put on trial in July 1981 and sentenced to life imprisonment in Italy, but freed in June 2000 after being pardoned by Italian President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi.

Despite rumors linking Agca with the Bulgarian secret services, and by extension the Russian KGB, the reasons for the attack have always been shrouded in mystery.

Historians have long held that John Paul II's support for the Solidarity-inspired democracy movement in Poland was a thorn in the side of the Soviet Union, and the late Pope has been credited with helping to tear down the Berlin Wall in 1989.

Italy put three Bulgarians and three Turks on trial in 1986 on charges that they had orchestrated the murder bid, but they were acquitted when prosecutors were unable to prove a link with Agca.

The commission report now concludes that one of the Bulgarians acquitted in 1986 for lack of evidence, Sergei Antonov, was indeed in St. Peter's Square at the time of the

US seen not ready for bird flu epidemic

WASHINGTON—THE UNITED STATES IS preparing for the arrival of the deadly H5N1 strain of bird flu but is not ready, a top US health official said Thursday, as a spate of bird deaths in the Bahamas raises fears it has reached the Americas.

Julie Gerberding, director of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, told a congressional hearing the US was intensifying its efforts globally to contain the rapidly spreading outbreak, which has killed at least 94 people since late 2003.

"We need to expect a bird arriving with this pathogen in the US and we are, as the government, taking the steps to be as prepared as possible," Gerberding testified before a House of Representatives committee.

Her testimony came in the context of a bird flu scare in the Bahamas, the Caribbean island chain nestled between Florida and Cuba. Tests for the H5N1 virus were under way on samples collected from dead birds discovered in a wildlife reserve.

The CDC chief pointed out that domestic poultry outbreaks were spreading to "more and more countries" and the pace was accelerating.

"Last year's strain looks different than this year's strain ... we're not dealing with a seasonal virus but a highly lethal virus that no one has immunity to," she told the House Appropriations subcommittee on Foreign Operations.

"The current situation right now isn't a good situation," she warned.

To contain the global H5N1 outbreak and prevent a human pandemic if the virus mutates to a form easily transmitted between people, the US government is working closely with "global partners" to build a worldwide network to fight the virus, she said.

"If there is a threat anywhere we have to respond as if it were a threat here."

But the federal health chief sounded a warning about the level of US preparedness.

"I would say that we're less than 50 percent ready but we are about a hundred times more prepared than we were three years ago, so our progress is rapid but our job is big and we have a long way to go," she said.

shooting, standing close to Agca.

A photograph purporting to show Antonov in the crowd, sporting a moustache and heavy glasses, was printed in Italian newspapers Thursday.

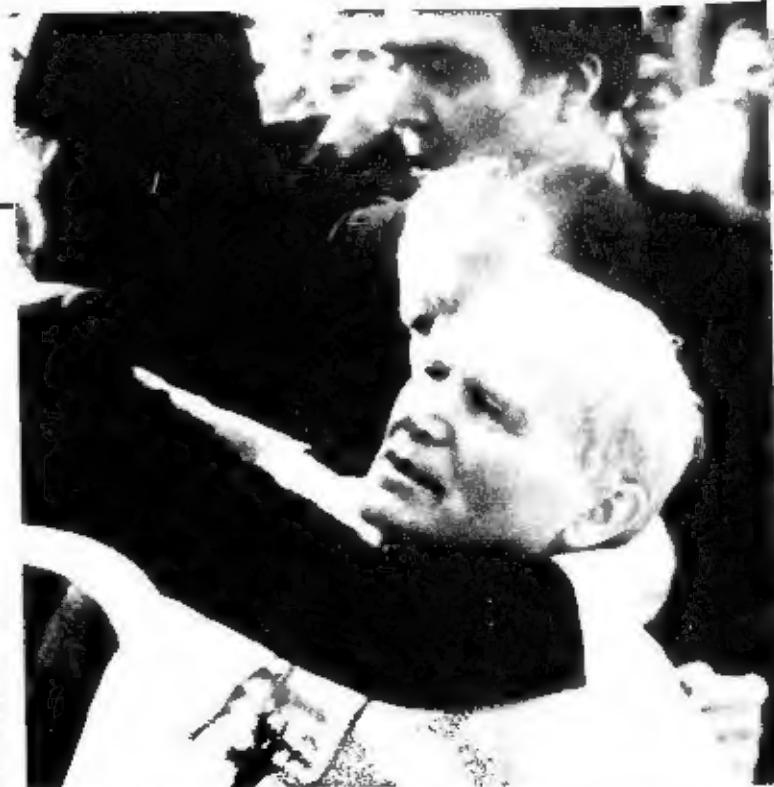
A lawyer for Antonov—head of Bulgaria's national airline in Rome—had previously argued a case of mistaken identity, but the Commission said police scientists had confirmed the man as Antonov.

The commission said the Soviets had "used the Bulgarian agents as cover against possible failure."

The Russians also used the East German secret service, the Stasi, to spread "disinformation and media poisoning," which Guzzanti said had been achieved with excellent results.

The full parliamentary commission, which has yet to adopt the report, is due to meet next week.

AFP



POPE John Paul II lies seriously wounded moments after he was shot by [REDACTED] Turkish Mehmet Ali Agca in St. Peter's Square in this May 13, 1981 photo.

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APP

China faces rural health crisis

By Elaine Kurtenbach

SHANGHAI, CHINA—THERE ARE NO OFFICIAL statistics tallying the toll in human suffering, wasted lives and broken families. But by most accounts, after nearly two decades of neglect, China is confronting a rural health crisis on a monumental scale.

Up to 90 percent of the 800 million people in China's countryside lack affordable medical care. Children go unvaccinated. AIDS patients can get free anti-retroviral drugs, but can't afford the monitoring or additional drugs they need.

"Most of the people in rural areas dare not to see a doctor when they get sick simply because they cannot afford it," said Zhang Deyuan, an expert on rural problems at Anhui University.

After years of neglect, communist leaders are now promising to rebuild a rural health care system that has fallen apart with the decline of farm cooperatives over two decades of economic reform.

The commitment is part of a package of policies aimed at addressing the huge gap between China's fast-growing cities and rural areas where the government faces growing protests over poverty, corruption and other problems.

Such issues of how to improve life in the restive countryside are expected to dominate the annual meeting of China's parliament, which opens on Sunday.

A plan issued this week by the Cabinet declares rural health care a national priority.

By 2010, "farmers can expect safe, effective, convenient and low-cost health services," said a Cabinet statement.



A YOUNG patient receives treatment at village clinic in Suxiao, Anhui Province in China in this Jan. 29, 2002 photo. Up to 90 percent of the 800 million Chinese living in the countryside now lack access to affordable medical care. Children go unvaccinated. AIDS patients can get free anti-retroviral drugs, but can't afford the monitoring or additional drugs they need.

It promised 9 billion yuan (\$1.1 billion; euro 900 million) in new spending on a nationwide system of rural medical cooperatives and doctors that would guarantee treatment to anyone in the countryside.

The challenge is how to make the system work when even urban health services are underfunded and doctors make money by prescribing unneeded drugs and tests, said Ray

Yip, director of the Beijing office of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Rural China never had lavish medical care, but for two decades after the 1949 communist revolution, villages got help from "barefoot doctors" with basic training who vaccinated children and provided other services.

"The situation became much worse when the farmers lost the barefoot doctors," says Li Ling, a researcher at the Chinese Economic Research Center at Peking University. "When people needed medical care, they could go to them for help."

The decline has been gradual, over nearly 20 years, while higher incomes and better food have helped improve public health overall, masking the severity of the problem, Yip said.

"Fundamentally, they're going down a slippery slope of decline in the overall health situation," he said.

According to Zhang, rural residents account for 70 percent of China's population of 1.3 billion people but get less than 20 percent of spending on medical services.

"This is extremely unbalanced," he said.

Chinese farmers pay most or all of their own medical expenses, while city dwellers who earn nearly three times as much pay for only a portion of their total costs.

And farmers are charged the same prices as their better-paid city cousins.

TOKYO—IT WAS LOVE AT FIRST drive.

When Seiichi Hime, a 35-year-old engineer-turned-cattle farmer, took the Peugeot 307 HDi for a spin two years ago, he couldn't believe the force produced by the small, 1.4-liter car.

The magic ingredient? A diesel engine.

Touted for their torque and fuel economy, diesel-powered cars now make up half the European market but have long since lost street credit in Japan, where, after a series of tax changes and a damaging image campaign, just a single model remains on sale.

But diesel-savvy European car makers, cheered by a growing acceptance in the United States and the arrival of cleaner fuel, are gearing up to reverse that trend in a move that could force domestic brands to follow suit and stir up the world's third-biggest car market.

A comeback by diesels could also give European brands—long the underdogs with just 4 percent of Japan's car market—a welcome boost, help domestic oil refiners cut their losses by creating a better balance of gasoline and diesel supply, nudge Japan closer to a UN-mandated goal of cutting greenhouse gases, and provide a boon for diesel-parts makers such as Bosch and Iden Co.

"You can buy practically anything in Japan, but not diesel cars," said Hime, a native of Okayama, who drove a gasoline 307 before buying his used diesel version online.

"It's high time Japan woke up to its merits."

It wasn't always so.

In 1990, diesel powered 6.4 percent of all new cars sold in

Japan. But a law in 1992 lowering the limit on emissions of smog-forming nitrogen oxide—a major byproduct when burning diesel fuel—and tax changes that effectively narrowed the cost advantage of diesel fuel and made diesel cars more expensive, prompted a steady downturn in demand.

In 1999 came the death blow from Tokyo's celebrity governor.

Kicking off a campaign to wipe diesel cars off the capital's streets, Shintaro Ishihara, in a widely televised stunt, waved a bottle containing black particles of carcinogenic soot that are emitted in greater quantity by diesels than gasoline vehicles.

The effect was immediate.

As the Japanese public increasingly shunned the powertrain, auto makers pulled back their offerings, and by 2003 there were only 10 models versus 24 a year earlier.

Now, only Toyota Motor Corp.'s Landcruiser Prado remains, while buyers can choose from some 200 gasoline models.

That will change this fall. In Japan's first new diesel car launch in four years, Daimler-Chrysler's Mercedes brand will roll out a diesel E-Class and has promised more to come.

"We're optimistic about diesels' prospects here," said Hans Tempel, head of Daimler-Chrysler Japan.

Other diesel advocates such as Volkswagen—which now offers the powertrain on its entire US product line—and France's Peugeot are also eager to test the water, although they have yet to announce concrete plans.

Reuters

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Phone users say text messaging still best service

SINGAPORE—TEXT MESSAGING REMAINS the most popular service for mobile phone users in the Asia Pacific despite offers for fancier applications such as e-mail and gaming, an industry research group said Friday.

International Data Corp. (IDC) said its survey showed that less than 10 percent of mobile phone users are utilizing services other than the reliable short messaging system (SMS), or text messaging.

There had been hype that the humble SMS would be eclipsed by its more advanced cousins following the emergence of pricey third-generation (3G) mobile phones and more advanced content applications.

But IDC said that the "latest findings reveal that, despite the proliferation of content-rich mobile data services, the adoption of advanced services such as mobile phone payment, online mobile gaming and mobile e-mail have yet to reach noteworthy levels of usage."

IDC telecom analyst Karen Rondon added:

"Improved adoption of different mobile data services will go hand in hand with the pervasiveness of mobile handsets capable of supporting such services as well as ease of use."

"The challenge therefore lies with service operators and mobile phone vendors to educate and accustom the market to the value proposition of such services and mobile devices that come with affordable price tags."

IDC's survey covered 4,056 urban Internet users in Australia, Hong Kong, Malaysia, China, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan.

Mobile phone penetration rates also rose sharply in 2005, IDC said, with the number of respondents who owned mobile phones reaching 90.2 percent, up from 80.2 percent in 2004.

"SMS (remained) as the most popular mobile data application, with 65 percent of the users sending text messages every day," IDC said.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER MANILA EDITION

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EU agrees to last-ditch talks with Iran

VIENNA—BRITAIN, FRANCE AND GERMANY have agreed to a last-minute request by Tehran for ministerial talks Friday ahead of possible UN action over Western fears that Iran is secretly developing nuclear weapons.

But there seemed to be little room for compromise, with Iran insisting on its right to enrich uranium and the European Union and the United States saying Tehran must give up this process, which makes nuclear reactor fuel but also atom bomb material.

The European trio which negotiates for the EU on Iran has warned Tehran in writing that progress Friday is totally dependent on Iran stopping uranium enrichment and cooperating with UN nuclear inspections.

"Anything short of this would result in a public disagreement, which would set back our shared objectives," said a letter from the trio's foreign ministers, as well as European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana, that was obtained by AFP.

The letter, which a diplomat said was delivered Tuesday to Iran's top nuclear negotiator Ali Larjani, sets "out in advance some of the considerations that will be critical for success," the text said.

"In our judgment, for such a meeting to be productive, we would need to conclude with a clear public commitment from Iran to return immediately to the status quo ante," the letter said, referring to Iran's agreement to suspend uranium enrichment.

Larjani requested the meeting but has given no specifics on what he seeks, one diplomat told AFP.

A European official said the EU countries, which fear Iran may be hiding secret development of atomic weapons, were "not particularly optimistic about the outcome of the meeting."

And the United States gave only half-hearted support to the talks, with state department deputy spokesperson Adam Ereli saying Washington was "under no illusions."

"As we have throughout this process, we're supportive of the EU-3—I think we're working well together," he said. "Let's see what happens on Friday."

"But the baseline is the same. Is Iran going to suspend enrichment activity? Is Iran going to return to the negotiations? Or is Iran going to continue, as we think they have, to stall and prevaricate and extend things in a meaningless way in

order to avoid censure?"

But an Iranian diplomat told AFP there "could be a breakthrough if things go well" and that the meeting "could be a good opportunity to reach a general understanding that could defuse the situation."

The talks come ahead of a crunch meeting March 6 of the United Nations' nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The IAEA is to make an assessment of Iran's nuclear program that will be sent to the UN Security Council, which could then take punitive action.

Larjani, speaking from Moscow after talks there, confirmed that he planned to meet EU representatives but gave no date.

AFP

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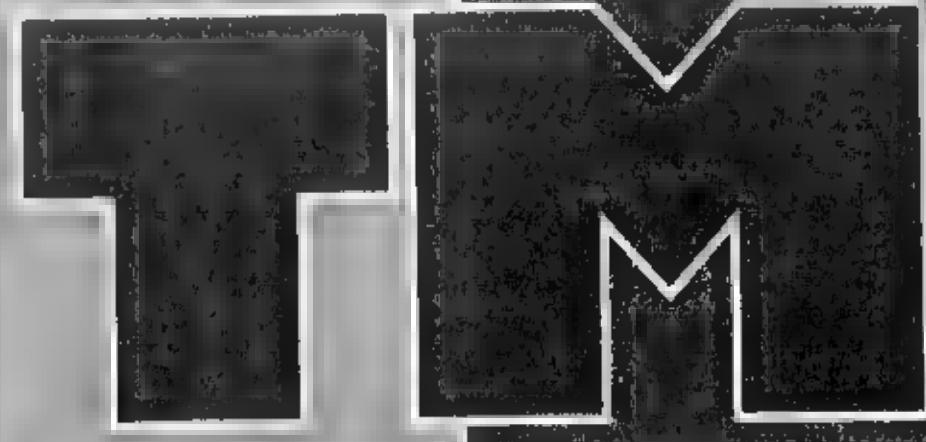
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OPINION

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Trail of corruption

EIF THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION HAD HOPED TO cover the trail of the P728-million fertilizer scandal by barring top government officials from testifying at the Senate, then it hoped wrong. True, the Senate blue ribbon and agriculture committees couldn't get the full story, with EO 464 getting in the way of the fact-finding inquiry. And because of the proclamation of a state of national emergency, they even had to call off the last hearing scheduled last Monday for fear that witnesses might be arrested for being a party to alleged destabilization moves in that legislative body. Still this did not keep the Senate from laying the blame right on the doorstep of Malacañang.

EDITORIAL The report, prepared by the two committees and released Wednesday, said that based on their investigation, "massive misappropriation, diversion and malversation of public funds and raids on the farmers' money" appear to have been committed by top officials of the Department of Agriculture. The committees recommended that plunder charges be filed against the officials who handled the program, including then Secretary Cito Lorenzo and Undersecretary Jocelyn Bolante, whom they called the "declared architect" of the fertilizer fund scam, as well as the fertilizer suppliers. Lorenzo and Bolante evaded questioning by the Senate by ignoring subpoenas and going abroad.

Aware that she enjoyed immunity, the senators stopped short of calling for the filing of similar charges against President Macapagal-Arroyo. But they obviously had little doubt about her complicity. Sen. Ramon Magsaysay, chair of the agriculture committee, said the Senate was holding her "accountable" for what it called the "premeditated, systematic theft" of the agricultural funds. "All allegations and testimony pointed to her benefiting the most in an intricate scheme of deception and fraud," the report said. "The fertilizer fund was misused. It was corrupted. It was intended to assure her victory" in the 2004 presidential elections. But by shielding officials "directly responsible for squandering taxpayers' money" and failing to disprove the charges, the report said, the President only confirmed her "culpability and involvement in this unforgivable act."

Given the strong language of their report and their equally strong belief that top officials were involved in high crimes, there is little doubt about how the senators want this case to end, and that is, with all those involved behind bars. But what the Senate wants is not always what it gets—and not especially when top administration officials and allies are involved.

In the normal course of things, the Office of the Ombudsman would have hurried to investigate this case the moment the allegations of massive fraud surfaced. The anti-graft body has the mandate to investigate such cases either on its own initiative or in response to a complaint, whether formal or informal. But then this is not your usual case. Not only are top officials involved, but they are being accused of misappropriating hundreds of millions of pesos to help bankroll the campaign of the President. And when the alleged fraudulent deals are related to the 2004 elections, paralysis sets in at the Ombudsman.

Consider the fraud-tainted P1.2 billion contract for the computerization of the counting of votes. The Supreme Court did not only nullify the deal but also ordered the Ombudsman to file graft charges against everyone who had a hand in it. That was two years ago. When the Court demanded to know recently why its order was being ignored, rather than explain or get on with the investigation, the Ombudsman practically challenged the Court to make good its threat to cite it for contempt, declaring that, being a constitutional body, it was beyond the Court's reach.

There is little indication that the Ombudsman is eager to touch the fertilizer scam either. Of course, it has earlier announced that it had organized a task force to look into the case. But that came only after the Senate told it to start working. Will the release of the Senate investigation report make the Ombudsman move faster? Highly unlikely. Not with the personalities involved and not especially since the trail leads to the Palace by the Pasig.

WHOEVER ADVISED PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO to issue her Proclamation No. 1017 must have unwittingly committed a monumental blunder or wickedly persuaded her to slit her political throat. Worse, she conceivably just ignored her knowledgeable advisers, insisted she knew better than they, and went ahead with her illegal act.

With several so-called two law experts in Malacañang, the secretary of justice in the Cabinet, the solicitor general at her beck and call, and other lawyers in her camp, she insistently issued her decree and exposed herself as a legal ignoramus. Even a law freshman would have informed her that her proclamation was a self-serving and unlawful impertinence.

The more enlightened members of the Philippine bar shared the correct consensus that her declaration of a state of national emergency was null and void, at best only her own factual assessment without legal or binding effect. Even if disputably correct, it does not confer on her additional sanctions to those available to her under present law.

She asserted the arbitrary power to make warrantless arrests from her mere declaration of a national emergency. That claim was absurd. There is nothing in the Constitution that authorizes that imposture, but that absence did not deter her. Her acts suggest her arrogant belief that she is above the law and may disregard it at her imperious pleasure.

The deteriorating peace and order does not automatically convert GMA into a remedial dictator. In the leading Emergency Powers Cases, 84 Phil. 368; 92 Phil. 603, Chief Justice Ricardo Paras said, "Emergency itself cannot and should not create power." She can exercise emergency powers only if they are entrusted to her by Congress after first ascertaining the existence of the emergency to justify their grant. Art. VI, Sec. 23(2) of the Constitution ex-

Proclamation No. 1017

SEPARATE OPINION



Isagani A. Cruz

plicitly provides: "In times of war or other national emergency, the Congress may, by law, authorize the President, for a limited period and subject to such restrictions as it may prescribe, to exercise powers necessary and proper to carry out a declared national policy." Congress alone can grant emergency powers to the President and define the national policy its constitutional delegate shall implement.

GMA's defenders said that her proclamation was based on Art. XII, Sec. 17 of the Constitution, which provides: "In times of national emergency, when the public interest so requires, the State may, during the emergency and under reasonable terms prescribed by it, temporarily take over or direct the operation of any privately owned public utility or business affected with public interest."

The argument scraped the bottom of the barrel. The provision applies only to economic and non-political matters and not to warrantless arrests of suspected criminals. More importantly, President Arroyo is not the State, which as a rule acts through statutes enacted by Congress. If the Constitution had intended otherwise, it would have expressly made the President an exception to the rule.

In the famous Steel Seizure Case, 343 US 579, the US Supreme Court reversed President Truman when, for national security reasons but without lawful authorization, he ordered US soldiers to temporarily take over the operation of private steel mills left idle by

their striking workers.

President Arroyo was actually placing the country under martial law but did not admit it because of the limitations in Art. VII, Sec. 18 of the Constitution.

The proclamation of martial law must be reported to Congress within 48 hours and will lapse after 60 days if not revoked or extended by it. The President cannot set aside the revocation. The Constitution and the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus are not suspended. All legislative assemblies shall continue to function, military tribunals cannot preempt civilian courts, and all persons arrested for rebellion or crimes related to invasion must be released if they are not judicially charged within three days. A challenge to martial law before the Supreme Court cannot be dismissed as a political question and must be decided within 30 days.

Martial law can be imposed only in case of rebellion or invasion which is why Proclamation No. 1017 invoked only lawless violence as its justification. This was another lame excuse to evade the restrictions of Sec. 18 while exercising in disguise the extraordinary powers it permits. This was a worse deception than the open abuses of his military power by Ferdinand Marcos.

Coming back to warrantless arrests, the rule laid down in the slavish case of Garcia-Padilla v. Enrile, 121 SCRA 472, was that suspected rebels can be arrested without warrant because rebellion is a continuing crime that is deemed being committed by the suspect whatever he may be innocently doing at the time of his arrest. It was from that ridiculous doctrine that I dissented when our reorganized Supreme Court affirmed it in the widely criticized case of Umii v. Ramos, 187 SCRA 311. That ruling has yet to be expunged from our jurisprudence.

What's the matter with the Ombudsman?

GET REAL



Solita Collas-Monsod

OMBUDSMAN MERCEDITAS GUTIERREZ HAS been in office for three months now. In that period, she found the time to prepare a 44-page comment on why the Supreme Court cannot hold the Office of the Ombudsman in contempt for failing to determine the criminal liability of Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos and other parties in regard to the P1.3 billion contract that was signed by Abalos and voided by the high

The irony is she wouldn't be answering the Supreme Court if she had devoted that time to doing her job—that is, if she had approved or disapproved the recommendations of the panel who did the preliminary investigation on the

To refresh our memories, let me try to construct a timeline (near as I can make out from newspaper reports and case documents) of the events surrounding the issue, starting with the high court decision.

Jan. 13, 2004: In a case filed by the Information Technology Foundation of the Philippines (ITFP), the Supreme Court declares null and void a P1.3 billion contract between the Comelec and a consortium called Mega Pacific eSolutions Inc. (MPEI). The decision directs the Office of the Ombudsman to "determine the criminal liability, if any, of the public officials (and conspiring private individuals, if any) involved (in) the Comelec decision and the contract."

Jan. 14, 2004: Ombudsman Simeon V. Marcelo quickly issues an order directing what is now called the Field Investigation Office (FIO) to conduct such an investigation.

Oct. 7, 2004: The FIO submits its findings to the Ombudsman's Legal, Monitoring and Prosecution Division, headed by Maria Olivia Roxas, which in turn prepares a complaint to the effect that the Comelec had indeed entered into a grossly disadvantageous contract with MPEI, such as (a) it knowingly acquired overpriced automated counting machines; and (b) the Comelec gave undue advantage to MPEI by allowing the latter to base the purchase

amount on the exchange rate of P58-\$1, when the prevailing rate then was P53-\$1. (This raised the cost further by about P130 million.) Reportedly, the FIO also found alarming linkages between the top officials of the Comelec and officers of MPEI (e.g., Abalos and MPEI incorporator Pedro Tan stood as sponsors at the wedding of a son of two MPEI incorporators, spouses Enrique and Rosita Tansipek).

Ombudsman Marcelo then inhibits himself from the case (because Abalos was a client of the Villaraza law office, of which Marcelo was a partner). He turns the case over to Deputy Ombudsman for Luzon Victor Fernandez for preliminary investigation and decision. Here is where the timeline gets fuzzy.

In a phone conversation, I asked Fernandez when he convened the preliminary investigation panel and when that panel made its resolution on the case (which had to be within 90 days from the time the contending parties filed all their affidavits and counter-affidavits). The good deputy ombudsman could not remember at all—a *lapsus memoriae* here. With that in mind, let us proceed.

Feb. 11, 2005: The Court receives a comment from the Ombudsman on a motion filed by the Comelec, asking permission to use the automated counting machines. In its comment, the Ombudsman stated that the case had been consolidated with other cases and "are the subject of preliminary investigation and/or administrative adjudication before the Office of the Deputy Ombudsman for Luzon." So at least we know that the preliminary investigation was already ongoing at that time

Nov. 30, 2005: Simeon Marcelo's resignation becomes effective.

Early December 2005: Merceditas Gutierrez is appointed as his successor. Deputy Ombudsman Fernandez turns over the papers on the Comelec case over to her, because, he says, his authority to act on the case ended when Marcelo ceased to be Ombudsman. Unfortunately, one cannot tell how long Fernandez was sitting on the case, or whether he just got cold feet. As I said, Fernandez had memory lapses and seemed to be in no mood to check his records. He also told me that the recommendations of his investigating panel were "confidential."

Dec. 22, 2005: ITPF asks the Supreme Court to direct the Ombudsman to update the Court on the progress of the investigation it had ordered almost two years before, as well as to give the Court an indication of when the Ombudsman would most likely complete its determination/investigation on whether any public official may be criminally charged for these illegal transactions.

Jan. 27, 2006: ITPF still tenacious, files a supplemental motion giving the Supreme Court information on what was going on at the Ombudsman, and asking the Court to ask the Ombudsman to show cause why it should not be held in contempt for failing to act on the Court's directive for more than two years from its receipt of the Jan. 13, 2004 decision.

Feb. 14, 2006: The Supreme Court grants the ITPF's request.

So what does Merceditas Gutierrez do? Instead of deciding whether or not to approve the recommendations of her preliminary investigation panel (those recommendations were definitely on her table when she started her job), she wastes her time getting all high and mighty about the Ombudsman's being an independent constitutional body (*duh!*) and the Supreme Court's directive being not mandatory but just a referral.

Is she protecting the people against corrupt officials? Or is she protecting corrupt officials?



SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 2006

OPINION**The Liberal Party coup****POLITICAL TIDBITS***Belinda Olivares-Cunanan*

ONE HAS TO HAND IT TO THE GROUPS OPPOSED to President Macapagal-Arroyo. They adroitly handled public opinion and virtually bamboozled her advisers, including the Cabinet security cluster and key allies, to coerce her to lift Proclamation 1017. There were those, including allies in Congress, who felt that GMA should have been given a free hand on the matter, as she had the best intelligence information regarding dangers to the state. But the voices of this minority group was drowned out by the national—and international—clamor demanding the lifting of PP 1017. I join all those who hope and pray that she wouldn't have to reimpose it anymore and that conditions would finally stabilize in this poor country.

The government, battered by the media that were clearly against PP 1017, had a tough time explaining the existence of a "conspiracy" against GMA to justify the proclamation. But lo and behold, suddenly, Jose Ma. Sison issued a statement from Utrecht, virtually endorsing a military coup against GMA. Joma said "there's no other way to ensure the legal and nonviolent ouster of the Arroyo regime" but to "encourage the military and forces of the reactionary government to side with the people and withdraw support from the regime." I got texts afterwards inquiring whose side Joma is on.

Star's Boo Chanco wrote that, from the way Sen. Rodolfo Blazon talked about Brig. Gen. Danny Lim and Marine Col. Ariel Querubin, he got the impression that "these two are the good guys." Indeed, many of my friends got the same impression from the TV coverage of the Marine standoff: Blazon was lavish in his praise of Querubin. Recalling the events of the bloody December 1989 coup attempt during Cory's time, I wonder if the former Marine commandant would have praised Querubin or welcomed political libertarians who could have exacerbated the very tense situation. In 1989, Querubin, who was then a major, challenged Blazon, then NCR commander, to stand with him before the entire Marine corps to see who had the bigger following. Blazon wisely ignored the challenge. Querubin joined the

bloody coup soon after and was badly wounded in the tank attack on Camp Aguinaldo. Blazon led government troops in crushing the rebels.

One wonders what kind of money former President Estrada's Saludo as Kawa Pilipino Foundation has that it could shell out P8 million or P10 million as "Christmas gift" to various soldiers' groups. But the bigger wonder is how his Christmas gift went only to groups identified with the rebel cause: the Magdalo soldiers, the group of Danny Lim and the Marine Corps. The explanation of the foundation's spokespersons is that the funds went to "cooperatives," but that doesn't look good for Erap as well as for those groups. It makes him look too conspiratorial and the rebel groups too mercenary.

The handling of the five leftist House members must be a tough balancing act for Speaker Jose de Venecia. When the police arrived to get them, JDV doubtless had to think of its implications. One was to prevent them from going back to the mountains, so they don't forsake their legislative mandate. Then, too, House members crossed partisan lines in clamoring for the protection of the civil rights of their colleagues. On the other hand, JDV had to demonstrate that no member of the House is above the law. He had to assure the police that if arrest warrants were to be issued by the court, he would turn over the five party-list representatives. JDV's solution was to put them under House custody, converting the anteroom of his big office into their provisional quarters. The five were getting fidgety at some point, but he managed to convince them that staying there was far safer than being outside.

In the political scene, the ouster of Liberal Party president Franklin Drilon and his replacement by Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, who was in turn replaced as LP chair by GMA chief of staff Mike Defensor, proved to be a bigger news than the lifting of PP 1017. Atienza's "coup" was bold and daring. The gathering of LP party leaders last Thursday began as a discussion of local autonomy, and ended up questioning the "dictatorship" of Drilon. Apparently, resentment against Drilon's "unauthorized" move to pit the party against GMA last July 8 had built up, especially since he had stubbornly resisted calls for a meeting of the grassroots leaders to thrash out the unity problem. A move by Gov. Sally Perez, an erstwhile Drilon ally, to declare all the party positions vacant led to the election of new leaders, despite the lonely effort of Drilon ally Chito Gascon to derail it. The LP leaders also voted to continue supporting GMA. But as with other groups, deep divisions showed. For instance, while Butch Abad and his wife, Rep. Henedina Abad, are against GMA, Batanes Gov. Vicente Gato and five of his mayors chartered a private plane just to come to Manila for Thursday's meeting, after regular flights were cancelled.

Drilon was quoted as saying his faction would question the "rump convention" before the Supreme Court and the Comelec, but I doubt if they would entertain a purely party matter. Moreover, in the LP leadership fight, things definitely favor Atienza since he fought the Marcos dictatorship since his days as a youthful opposition assemblyman.

Reports say that 10 days ago, Sen. Mar Roxas, grandson of one of the LP founders, the late President Manuel Roxas, gathered the House LPs to ask them not to rock the boat. He reportedly argued that by 2007 Drilon would no longer be a senator and he would then be the logical party leader. But 21 House LPs still showed up last Thursday. Reports also indicate that up to the last minute, leaders like Rep. Danny Suarez were trying to convince Roxas to become chair, but he was not ready to break away from the Senate group of four LPs.

'Free 4 All' for a free media**AT LARGE***Rina Jimenez-David*

"FREE 4 ALL" IS BOTH THE NAME AND SLOGAN of a campaign to keep the media free. "Free for all" is also a phrase meant to describe a brawling, unstructured process. "Labababo" might be the Filipino equivalent.

The launch of the "Free 4 All" campaign—including the public introduction of 10 women "advocates" from a cross-section of occupations, persuasions and beliefs—threatened to turn into a "free for all" when a TV reporter raised the question of whether the group was demanding the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo as well. In keeping with the "diverse" nature of the "flawless elements" in the all-women line-up, it turned out the group was about evenly split in opinion. But while the women may simply agree to disagree on the "Gloria option," they were all united in the belief that the media be kept truly free, independent, open and responsible.

Invited by Isa International-Manila, an international feminist NGO active in women's advocacy in the media, to lend their names and faces to the campaign were: multimedia artist Cynthia Alexander, grass-roots community leader Lina Bacalardo, academic and former NCRFW chair Aurora Javate de Dios, feminist health advocate Sylvia Estrada Claudio, artist and environmental advocate Chin Chin Gutierrez, homemaker Mavis Diy Lee, student Erika Sales, journalist Olive Tripone, lawyer Riza Faith Ybañez, and this columnist.

Guest speaker at yesterday's launch was magazine editor Jo Ann Maglipon, who was one of the women journalists "invited" by military authorities in the 1980s. Maglipon bemoaned what she called the "slow death for all forms of expression" nowadays, with a creeping repression constricting not just the news media but other forms of expression as well, including entertainment and the arts.

"There are no leftists in this assault," reminded Maglipon. "We are all writers now."

SOME might have been wondering what all the fuss was about, since the President had "lifted" Proclamation 1017 even as the launch was ongoing.

Nigeria's road to ruin**WORLD VIEW***Ian Bremmer*

becoming ideological.

Whatever the motivations of the various groups, a surge of militia attacks and kidnappings over the past several weeks has now shut down roughly 20 percent of Nigeria's oil exports and killed dozens of people. Shell has closed key facilities in the Delta after the abduction of several workers. Once a verdict is reached in Dokubo's trial, probably this summer, violence is expected to intensify.

In addition, religious violence sparked by the Danish cartoons mocking the Prophet Muhammad rippled through Nigeria in February. Angry Muslim and Christian mobs burned churches and mosques, killing dozens of people in a series of attacks and reprisals that have deepened the sectional divide between the Muslim north and the Christian south.

If all this turmoil weren't enough, the discovery of avian flu in the northern provinces further undermines political stability. Obasanjo has called on Muslim farmers in the area to cull their birds, a key source of protein in a region where malnutrition is a constant threat.

In some ways, Nigeria is plagued with the same problems facing Iraq. Various ethnic and religious groups, based in different regions, are battling for oil revenue and political clout. As in Iraq, the conflict could provoke large-scale bloodletting.

Yet, unlike Iraq, Nigeria has a recent history of relatively stable democratic governance. The country's factions each have good reason to compromise before the conflict comes to a head. Northern governors could, for example, offer the southern states a larger share of Nigeria's oil revenue in exchange for their support for a northern president.

But achieving such a compromise won't be a smooth or predictable process. On the contrary, the risks of extended political instability and further large-scale disruptions to Nigeria's oil output will remain high, at a time when the world can least afford it.

Project Syndicate

ident is a southerner. For the moment, Obasanjo offers them their best opportunity to realize that goal. Last December, 16 of Nigeria's 17 southern governors signed the "Enugu Declaration" in support of the constitutional amendment that would permit him a third term.

This is a bad time for Nigeria's federal government to face these distractions. The Niger Delta region, home to most of Nigeria's oil and many of its poor people, is in turmoil. In October 2004, violence in the region forced Obasanjo's government to negotiate with militia leader Asari Dokubo, after his men attacked a series of Royal Dutch Shell oil facilities and threatened to "burn down the area." In December 2004, Dokubo's militias took 75 oil workers hostage and forced Shell to shut down about 10 percent of the country's oil supply. Dokubo then forced Obasanjo into a peace deal.

The deal did not last long. After Dokubo renewed threats to oil infrastructure last September, he was arrested on sedition charges and now faces the possibility of execution or life in prison. Dokubo's allies have responded with new attacks. A splinter group, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta, has claimed credit for several recent attacks and kidnappings of foreign workers, and says it will not retreat until Delta states gain control of the revenue produced by locally extracted oil.

There are also fears that the splintering of Dokubo's militias has created fertile ground in the Delta for Islamist groups. A few weeks ago, a previously unknown organization called "The Martyr's Brigade" claimed credit for attacks on Delta pipelines, raising concerns among multinationals that mercenary resistance in the region is

Snatched!

IT WAS FUNNY—IN A WAY. IT REMINDED ME OF THOSE slapstick comedies where the bad guy gets whacked in the

It happened a few afternoons ago. I was killing time in one of the coffee chains, reading a good book. At the table in front of me were two women who came with a foreigner. They had placed their valuables on the vacant chairs. Two unremarkable guys entered and stood between my table and

YOUNG BLOOD*Chris Daniel Loza*

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

The women sprang to their feet, shouting: "Hay, mam! Bag namin!" One of the women grabbed one of the snatches as the foreigner struggled to his feet to go after them. Fortunately, the women's voices were so loud that everyone, including the guard, heard them, and so one of the snatches was caught with a bag, now placed inside an even bigger bag, in his hands.

What followed next was like a typical scene in sitcoms where the bad guys apologize profusely and the hero whacks them. One of the women said, "Lahat ng tuo dito nagpapakahirap maghanapbhuhay tapos ikaw nanakawin mo lang (Everyone here is having a hard time trying to earn a living, and you rob us just like that)." She followed this up with a whack on the snatcher's shoulder.

When the guard asked the women if they would be pressing charges, the woman said, "Of course! He should be jailed, otherwise what's going to stop him from doing it again?"

Seeing that he was in deep trouble, the snatcher began to apologize again. "Ma'am, sorry na po," he pleaded. "Sorry, talaga po. Nagkamali lang ako ng kuha. Hindi ko po sinasadya (I'm truly sorry. I grabbed the wrong item. I didn't mean to do it.)"

A lapse in judgment? Haven't I heard that before? Haven't I seen somebody with a forlorn face apologizing for a lapse in judgment on national TV lately? But up to now, she has gotten away with her "mistake."

The sad truth is, Filipinos can be forgiving and we forgive the wrong people. Sometimes we quickly forgive so we can get on with our lives. We forgive and we justify our action by saying it is only natural for human beings to commit sin. And we forgive most easily the rich and the influential. We especially let people with money and power get away with their sins and accept their simple, insincere apologies, believing their crimes to be a lapse in judgment, as if all their lives they've lived immaculately and this lapse in judgment is an isolated aberration in their very moral lives.

But the words of the woman on national TV betrayed her. It wasn't something like an accidental, stupid mistake that she did. Judgment presupposes thinking, and shows she intended to rob the Filipino people of their real choice. Perhaps if she said, "Oops! I did it again!" and went to Mars instead of saying that she had committed a lapse in judgment, she could have been forgiven her stupid mistake, even if that would make her—a US-educated economist—look dumb. But in an attempt to demonstrate that she was in control of the situation, she owned up to her mistake and thus, admitted that she wanted to make sure she would keep her one-million vote lead over her nearest rival.

No one will know for sure how many politicians said "Hello, Garc!" on the phone. And even if Virgilio Garcillano had given all the names of the politicians who called him, we can't expect everyone to apologize unless each of them had been wiretapped talking to the election official. Indeed, no one will apologize for a lapse in judgment that no one knows about unless he is dying and has nothing more to lose (except, perhaps, a crack at eternal happiness) or he is writing a tell-all, you're-all-going-down-with-me memoir.

It seems we need more people, and not just those whose personal interests were directly affected, to say: "Lahat ng tuo dito nagpapakahirap maghanapbhuhay tapos ikaw nanakawin niyo lang!" These cheaters, these snatchers got away because we have become complacent. Maybe if some physical evidence would turn up to prove that we have been robbed, like a bag or an unopened envelope, we could get our act together. Or maybe if we get whacked in the head, we'd wake up and do something to fix this country.

Chris Daniel Loza, 22, graduated from the Ateneo de Manila University last year with a major in Electronics and Communications Engineering. He passed the board exam last November.

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THEY SAID**Fluid**

"I can't be categorical. Everything is so fluid today."

—Former President Corazon Aquino, on whether she would rule out a political alliance with former President Joseph Estrada

Avaricious portrayal

"The CBCP (Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines) may not have its technical mining jargon but it is in contact with the mass base adversely affected by avaricious mining."

—Archbishop Oscar Cruz reacting to the portrayal of bishops as "ignorant" of the mining industry

Irony and contrast

"Ironically, Edsa I and II were about a moral revolution, hope, love and good government, while President Arroyo's administration is about despair, hate, cheating, lying and stealing."

—House Deputy Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano

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A dictatorship upon us

WE MUST ALL BE PROTESTING (in strict adherence to the democratic principles upheld by the first People Power 20 years ago) Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's declaration of a national state of emergency.

I was a mere seven-month-old baby when that wonderful, bloodless uprising succeeded in overthrowing the Marcos dictatorship. (I therefore could not have felt the hardships that our nation then endured under that regime.) But, today, I am convinced that GMA's "national state of emergency" is as bad as—if not worse than—martial law.

Warrantless arrests. Violent dispersal of peaceful rallies. Prohibition of rallies. Threats of government takeover of media outfit and vital industries. Police raids on newspaper offices. These are scenes reminiscent of Marcos' rule. We, therefore, should not be saying that martial law is just at hand, for it is now really upon us.

In the movie "Innocent Voices," a priest beaten by Salvadoran authorities said: "Today brothers, it is not enough to pray."

We want a dictator ousted, we should do something to oust her. *Nasa Diyos ang awa, nasa tao ang gawa.* (God helps only those who help themselves.)

Someone said: "History doesn't repeat itself but man repeats his errors." Let us expect that GMA and her allies will do everything to stay in power. We're tolerating them anyway, as a vast majority of our people "tolerated," albeit grudgingly, the Marcos dictatorship for almost 15 years. Unless we act today to stop these Marcaian, if not Nazi-minded "leaders," we might as well expect the worst. Where truth becomes lie, and lie becomes truth, and light is called darkness, and darkness, light, to paraphrase the Good Book.

One last thing, we must all remember that if we do not speak against oppression or injustice, it should not surprise us if the next tongue that will be clipped is ours.

—DAVID MICHAEL SAN JUAN, president, Student Government-Supreme Student Council, Bulacan State University, City of Malolos, Bulacan



Unsafe SLEX stretch

FOR OVER A YEAR NOW, THE STRETCH along the Makati side of the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) from Zobel Roxas Street to EDSA has been without street lights.

Reported snatchings and muggings are becoming rampant every day in this stretch, and the victims are mostly hapless students of a nearby computer school and passersby frequenting this busy thoroughfare.

There is now an ongoing project to beautify this portion of the SLEX. But this will just go to naught if Juan de la Cruz remains unsafe here. The concerned government authorities should replace immediately those busted street lights.

—PEDRO REFUERZO JR., 6737 Taylo St., Makati City

Good-mannered Filipinos with right values

I AGREE WITH THE OBSERVATION EXPRESSED in the Feb. 10 editorial about our present-day society's drift toward selfishness. Of course, there are still those who are well-mannered, helpful, respectful of elders, etc. But those who do not know good manners and right conduct seem to be increasing in number. Many of them are actually good at heart—I could sense this from those I have encountered—but it is sad that they do not know how to manifest their goodness.

My guess is that, in the environment where they grew up, they have never been taught how to be good. Here is where the family comes in as the first school and the first society that a human being encounters. Everything that the child sees in the family is going to influence him for the rest of his life. It contributes to the formation of his character.

If the formation is wrong, it will take strong will on his part to reform himself. Currently, in our society, there are strong and influential forces which are trying to destroy the family. To destroy the family is to destroy society because members of so-

cietry come from families.

I hope that the Inquirer, as an influential media organization, will help protect the family, specifically in the aspect of child-rearing. Teaching children good manners and right conduct is the obligation of parents, as much as it is their right and privilege. They have a right and it's their privilege to raise their children according to social traditions and to their moral and religious beliefs. The state, under ordinary circumstances, should not arrogate unto itself the power to wear away the children from the right of parents to inculcate in them the right values.

No school should force on our children subjects, such as sex, which are too radical a topic for their immature mind. Such subjects, coupled with the current drift toward consumerism and materialism, only promote selfishness and the rule of the jungle. Ironically, some animals in the "forest jungle" are more caring than the animals in our "cement jungle" when it comes to attending to their respective species.

—BELLAFLOR B. GONZALES, bpgonzales@yahoo.com

Cases on Forbes Park restrictions still pending

THE FORBES PARK ASSOCIATION (FPA) wishes to clarify the circumstances surrounding the recent decision of the Makati courts purportedly lifting the Deed of Restrictions on the land titles of some Forbes Park homeowners with property along McKinley Road. We do this in the interest of presenting the whole picture of the case, of which some facts Victor C. Agustin failed to mention in his March 1 column.

The owners claim that the Deed of Restrictions has expired. This runs counter to an earlier Court of Appeals ruling affirming a decision by the Home Insurance Guaranty Corp., extending the Forbes Park Deed of Restrictions to Jan. 1, 2024. This decision had become final and executory. As such, the basis for the cases filed by the homeowners was without basis.

Secondly, when the case was filed, the FPA was not made a party to the case as a respondent. Neither was the FPA notified despite its clear interest in and involvement in the cases. Since there was no notification, these cases could not be contested by a fundamentally important party. Thus, there was an infirmity in the proper execution of basic due process.

Citing the lack of basis and the infirmity of the process, the FPA has petitioned the Court of Appeals to annul the decision of the Makati courts on grounds of extrinsic fraud. These cases remain pending to this day.

The FPA will exert all measures and take all actions necessary to defend the will of the majority of the homeowners to maintain and keep Forbes Park a low-density community.

—SYLVIA LOPEZ ALEJANDRO, president, Forbes Park Association, Makati City

Inappropriate photo?

AFTER READING THE NEWS ITEM "MORE initial aid coming" (PDI, 2/21/06) I found the accompanying photo of the three nuns taking pictures on ground zero in Ginsaugon totally inappropriate. The photo gave the impression that the nuns went to the disaster-struck region only for a holiday.

A photo of people praying for the safety and recovery of the victims would have been better than the one showing the nuns with smiles on their faces, as if ridiculing the hard-working Taiwanese on the photo beside it.

—WILLIAM H., c/o philippine@rueyshung.com

The nuns did their share of helping and praying, and they were just taking time out. Give them a break.—Ed.

Help

PLEASE HELP THE ART COMMUNITY. THE forgery of paintings is once again rampant.

Recently, right in the UST Art School Gallery, fake Kukok drawings were exhibited. Why do I say "fake"? Because I have the original of those Kukok drawings.

I saw several fake Malangs brought to my studio in West Avenue for authentication. With the help of the Inquirer, we can stop or minimize the forgery of artworks. Calling all art collectors, government officials, gallery owners, etc.

—MALANG

Glorious stories

WE THANK THE INQUIRER FOR PUBLISHING the EDSA I stories to mark the 20th anniversary of that historic event.

It was indeed a glorious past for the Filipinos and I hope it would forever inspire and light the way for the future.

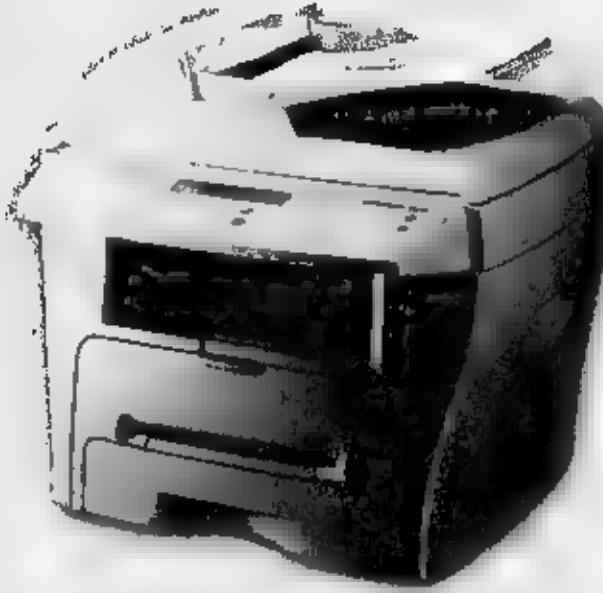
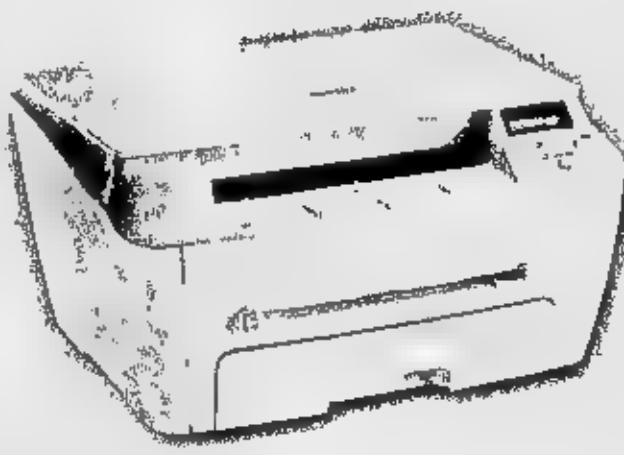
More power to the Inquirer and to INQ7.net!

—THELMA BELTRAN SIM, tbsim@hotmail.com

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INQUIRER Visayas

Coconut shell used in making furniture

By Vicente S. Labro
Tacloban City

AFTER THE POPULAR virgin coconut oil and the award-winning "coconet" comes the coco shell board.

Living up to its reputation as a tree of multiple uses, the coconut has shown that the shell of its nuts can also be used as wood materials for dining tables, chairs, sala sets, cabinets, frames and other similar products.

Businessman Domingo Ramirez, 48, discovered the latest use of the lowly "bagol" (coconut shell), which usually ends up as charcoal, cooking fuel or handicraft material.

"The coconut shell board is really durable," Ramirez said. So far, he has already created a dining table and chair, panels and boards from coconut shells.

Experts in a state university in Tacloban City have tested the product for strength, permeability and hardness, he said.

He said he had received orders for coco shell board panels and tiles for making furniture pieces, bar counters, and flooring for an indoor basketball court, but these had been politely refused.

Ramirez explained that although it had been about five years since he started experimenting on the new product, he



DOMINGO Ramirez pedals the coconut shell cleaner as he cleans the shell at their factory in Barangay Dilt, Tacloban City.

VENLARDO

could not yet produce the coco shell boards in commercial volume due to lack of capital.

He said his group had acquired coco shell crushers and cleaners, and a mixer worth more than P200,000, which would remove

the fibers left on husked shells, pound the shells to powder, and treat the shell powder with some chemicals.

Patent

Ramirez said he got a govern-

ment patent for the coco shell board in March 2004.

Now, the imaginative entrepreneur is working on some designs for dining table and chairs at a shop on a vacant lot at Barangay Dilt, 8 km from the

city proper.
"What we have is a backyard operation," said mechanical engineer Enrique Sucaldito, 68, who retired from an equipment firm in Manila and now serves as a consultant of Ramirez in the coco shell board business.

Sucaldito owns the property where the improvised factory stands. Ramirez mixes the powdered shells and chemicals in a workroom at the right side of the shop, while outside the enclosed area, metal worker Laurentino Epil makes iron molds for a dining chair.

Sucaldito said he believed that their product could help the country's economy, provide jobs to people in the rural areas and help preserve the environment.

"Just imagine how many trees could be saved by using coconut shell instead of wood. People can also earn extra income by gathering and selling coconut shells," he said.

"His son, Socrates, has invested P200,000 into the venture. "We thought the P200,000 was a sufficient amount for us to go into commercial production of coco shell boards, but it was just enough for the procurement of the machineries," Sucaldito said.

Wood substitute

Ramirez said he got the idea of making a coconut shell board when he saw an old coconut shell that had been polished and black-

ened from years of being buried, but still used as a container.

"It entered my mind that the coconut shell can be made into a strong material that is a substitute for wood," said Ramirez.

He said it took him two years to perfect the process of making coco shell boards.

At present, Ramirez owns and manages three calling stations, a public vehicle and a fish cage. His extra time he devotes to their plant in Barangay Dilt, 10 km from his house in Barangay San Jose on the outskirts of the city.

Wanted: Investors

Ramirez said his income was just enough for his family and he did not have enough money to launch his invention commercially.

He said he tried but failed to get the support of government agencies, like the regional offices of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Science and Technology, as well as some politicians and businessmen.

The government agencies required them to submit a lot of documents, he said. In some cases, his presence was needed in Manila, which meant shouldering transportation, and board and lodging expenses.

Despite their predicament, Ramirez, Sucaldito and Epil continue to work in the factory, hoping that someday their novel idea will benefit many Filipinos.



DR. LEO Avila and Francisco "Toti" Juan of the Chicago Reef Gala Committee, break bread with Apo Island barangay captain Mario Pascobello (right).

ALEX PAL

Fil-Ams build bakery for Apo Island residents

By Alex V. Pal
Apo Island, Dauin, Negros Oriental

FISH USUALLY COMES TO mind when one thinks about food on Apo Island.

With reason. After all, the 74-hectare island barangay off the town of Dauin in Oriental Negros has made a name for itself as the world's first model of a community-managed coral reef.

But while the residents have their fill of fish almost every day, they had long wondered how it would be like to eat fresh, hot bread baked right in their own community.

That dream remained until Jan. 31 last year when a bakery rose from a vacant lot near the shore.

"Now, we can eat hot pan de sal!" barangay captain Mario Pascobello enthused as the first pieces of bread rolled out of the oven.

Soon, other kinds of bread were made—ensaymada, loaves, pan de español, pan de coco, and 16 more.

"This is a big thing for the islanders because people, especially those who had lived for a while in Manila, acquired the taste for bread and now look for it every morning," said Pablina Cadiz, a Silliman University biologist.

Money for the construction of the bakery and the purchase of an oven, mixer and generator worth P180,000 came from a \$10,000 fund raised by the Philippine Reef Gala Committee, a group of Filipinos living in Chicago, Illinois.

Love at first sight

Most of the 28 members of the organization had not even heard of Apo Island until 2002, when the Shedd Aquarium of Chicago, after visiting various coral reefs around the world, decided to replicate the Philippine model as a permanent exhibit.

It was love at first sight. "Our group was

created spontaneously after we saw the beauty of the underwater life of Apo Island," said Francisco "Toti" Juan, a travel agent and executive director of the University of the Philippines Alumni Foundation in the United States, who heads the group.

The Filipino-Americans and their friends thought of supporting the Shedd Aquarium and the Apo community in an effort to counter bad publicity about the Philippines.

Juan said the group decided to raise funds to support educational and livelihood opportunities for the islanders. The money, managed by Silliman University, was to be spent on projects decided upon by the residents themselves.

Aside from the bakery, the funds were tapped to send five youths to high school and two to college. Under the agreement, the college scholars will take biology, education or other courses that can help improve the quality of life on the island.

After the first year of operation, the bakery, managed by the Women's Association of Apo Island, netted a profit of P24,421.52.

Satisfied

Juan and Dr. Leo Avila, a member of the Philippine Reef Gala Committee, visited Apo in January and, upon hearing the progress of their efforts, decided to donate \$10,000 more.

"We are very satisfied," said Juan, a former professor at the UP College of Business Administration.

He said they would again visit the island in two years in time for the graduation of their scholars.

Juan said many people in the United States want to help the Philippines but just don't know how.

With this experience, Juan and other members of his group hope to prove that, although it may not be possible to help the entire country, they can make a difference by helping one town or one barangay at a time.



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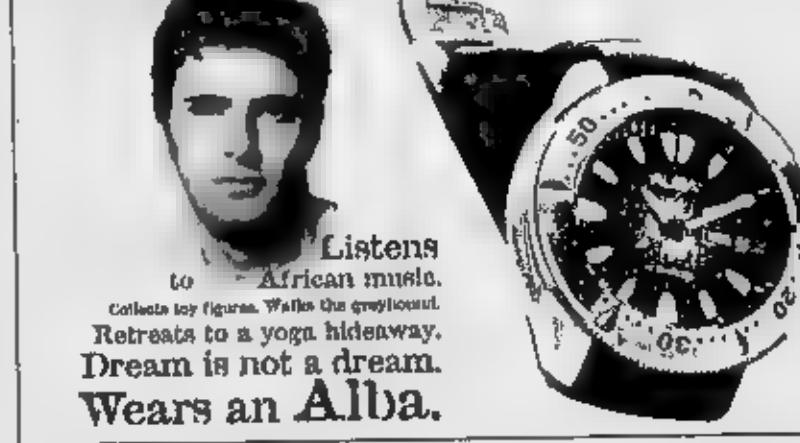
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Basilan mayor slain in gun attack

ZAMBOANGA CITY— Mayor Luis Biel II of Isabela City in Basilan died after an attack by a lone gunman around noon yesterday, police authorities said.

"Senior Insp. William Gadayan, Isabela City police chief, said four people, including one of Biel's security escorts, were also injured in the attack."

Gadayan said Biel was leaving the city hall compound when the suspect, armed with a .38 caliber revolver, started firing at the executive.

"He said Biel's security aides fired back and killed the attacker in the process."

The mayor was then rushed to the Basilan provincial hospital but died there 20 minutes later.

Biel died from two bullet wounds in the back.



THE MAYOR being wheeled into a hospital in Isabela City where he died after a gun attack.

RAYMOND LINTAG/CONTRIBUTOR

the suspect.

"We were having a difficulty in identifying him because we did not recover any identification documents. His face was also badly deformed because of bullet wounds," Gadayan said.

Gadayan said the police were also trying to determine what could be the possible motive behind the mayor's assassination.

He said among the leads they were pursuing was Biel's order to demolish a mosque near the Isabela City seaport.

The demolition order was being opposed by residents but Biel had managed to secure a court approval in October last year.

He offered to build a mosque in another area, but residents said the proposed site was too far from where they lived.

The slain mayor planned to turn the area into a trading center for marine products.

Julie Alipale with a report from Rolly San Juan, PDI Mindanao Bureau

ROUNDUP

Pacquiao's treat

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Featherweight boxing idol Manny Pacquiao

treated 700 poor children here to snacks on Feb. 27. The children, accompanied by their parents or guardians, waited for about four hours not necessarily to get free burgers and drinks but to catch a glimpse of their ring idol. Many arrived as early as 9 a.m. to queue for the 11 a.m. activity. But Pacquiao arrived about 1 p.m. He apologized for the delay claiming he had previous engagements. Pacquiao personally distributed burgers and drinks to the children.



Aquiles Zonia, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Alert vs trafficking

DUMAGUETE CITY—Dumaguete Bishop John Du asked Catholics to be vigilant amid the trafficking of children and women in the country. "Trafficking is a modern day slavery that deserves widespread attention," Bishop Du said in a pastoral letter. Scores of potential victims were spotted in transit areas such as airports, ports and bus terminals, and hundreds more were being rescued from prostitution, servitude and bonded labor, the letter said.

Du called on the Catholic faithful to be aware and vigilant of their rights under Republic Act 9209 or the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law.

Alex Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau

Business plan wins

DUMAGUETE CITY—The team from the Asian College of Science and Technology here recently won the Business Plan of the Year award in the 2006 Oriental Negros Innovation Awards for their Automated Rice Seeded Protection (ARSP). The ARSP won over four business plans from other schools, which were a mosquito trap, charcoal briquettes, a prepaid Internet purchase card, and a sensor system with SMS-based notification. The ARSP is an electronically controlled seedbed that uses sensors to regulate heat and moisture to create an environment conducive to the growth of the seedlings. The ACSAT team won P50,000, which is intended as seed money to start their business.

Alex Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau

Drive vs stray dogs

LEGAZPI CITY—In its drive against rabies, the City Veterinary Services Office here has offered a broiler chicken, locally known as "kabir," and a duck in exchange for a stray dog which its owner would surrender to the city pound. City veterinarian Nancy Andes said the new livelihood-related scheme was adopted to restrain the spread of rabies in the northern barangays of the city where at least 10 persons have been bitten by a rabid dog.



Edgar Aleja, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Minors charged

LEGAZPI CITY—Four male minors aged 9 to 13 were charged Friday with attempted robbery after they were caught inside the premises of the PSBank branch here last week. The four street kids, whose identities were withheld, barged into the bank's ATM counter but panicked upon hearing the alarm. Two of them suffered bruises and lacerations when they broke the glass door to escape. The boys have been placed under the custody of the City Social Welfare and Development Office.

Edgar Aleja, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Mayon subsides

LEGAZPI CITY—Mayon Volcano has simmered down with only four volcanic quakes as of 6 a.m. on Feb. 25. Ed Laguerta, of the Lingnion Hill Observatory here, said the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology continued to observe the volcano as it revived its monitoring devices installed on the slopes of the mountain. While Alert Level 2 stays, Phivolcs warned that the 6 km permanent danger zone stays.

Ed Aleja, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Cop dead in gunfire

TARLAC CITY—A policeman was killed while another was wounded in a gunfire with armed men along the Barangay San Rafael portion of MacArthur Highway here on March 1. Police said SPC Francisco Pestaño and Chief Insp. Tomas Fria, both members of the police's traffic management group (TMG), flagged down a jeep at 9 a.m. to check if it was the vehicle commanded by three men in Capas town. The policemen approached the driver and asked if he had picked up three men in Barangay Taaga in Capas. When the driver said yes, they proceeded to inspect the passengers. At that point, Pestaño shouted "Baril may baril sir (Gun, he's got a gun sir!)" and a gunfight ensued. Pestaño died instantly while Fria was wounded and taken to a local hospital.

Russell Arador, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Donation for Leyte

BAGUIO CITY—Sun Life Financial, an international insurance company, launched the Tabang Leyte project here last week and donated Canadian \$50,000 to victims of the Southern Leyte landslide. The donation was made under the company's "Sagip 111" a series of initiatives on education, poverty alleviation and other needs of various communities in the country. Sun Life officials also donated P25,000 under its "Sagip Kabataan" project, to the Ili Up Baguio, an organization of businessmen in the city, to help rehabilitate the children's playground in Burnham Park.

Donna Demetillo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.

PDI Visayas Bureau

SEMIRARA ISLAND, ANTIQUE—A power barge of the National Power Corp. that spilled more than 300,000 liters of oil into waters, mangrove forests and corals off Semirara Island was unchecked for seaworthiness before it was allowed to set out to sea.

A Senate committee investigating what had been described as the country's biggest oil spill got admission that only a surveyor from the GSIS, the barge's insurer, checked the barge before it was allowed to leave port.

The committee on environment, chaired by Sen. Pia Cayetano, got the admission from Napocor chief Cyril de Callar in a hearing Tuesday.

When it overturned Dec. 19 because of huge waves and strong winds,

"Did Napocor allow the barge to leave Masbate despite the bad weather knowing for a fact that a barge is unfit to travel at such weather conditions?" Cayetano asked.

The Coast Guard said while the cleanup of the spill was nearly 33 percent complete, much has to be done.

Capt. Arturo Olavano, head of the field operations group of the Coast Guard's Task Force Semirara, said the cleanup has covered 37 hectares of the estimated 112 hectares of mangrove forests around the island.

Studies made by researchers from the University of the Philippines in the Visayas (UPV) said the area damaged by the spill was 112 hectares.



THE CLEANUP of spilled oil in mangrove forests near Semirara Island continues.

PI PHOTO

They have collected more than 25,000 sacks of contaminated material.

The 5,045-hectare island is part of a group of nine islands of Caluya at the northern tip of Panay Island. It is the site of the SMC, the biggest coal mine in Asia.

The Coast Guard said 364,120 liters of bunker fuel were spilled when the barge ran aground 200 meters off

Sabog Bobog in Barangay Semirara.

The barge was carrying about 874,570 liters of bunker fuel.

Sadaba said the extent of the damage and the long-term impact on the mangroves and marine life can only be determined after a comprehensive study.

He said based on similar spills in other countries, the recovery of mangroves may take 10 to 50 years.

'Jueteng' makes return in 2 Nueva Vizcaya towns

By Melvin Gascon

PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAYOMBONG, NUEVA VIZCAYA—Gaming odds have succeeded in reviving illegal gambling operations in at least two towns in this province this week.

Jueteng bet collectors on Wednesday were spotted doing the rounds in some villages here and in nearby Solano town, which sources described as "dry run" operations before

activities expand to other towns.

The resurgence came barely a month after jueteng operations here were stopped when an anti-illegal gambling task force from the Philippine National Police headquarters in Camp Crame raided a gambling den in Solano on Jan. 17.

"[Operators] started with this dry run to test the waters. When operations go smoothly, bet collection will follow in

heightened alert due to the declaration of a state of national emergency.

But Senior Supt. Rogelio Damazo, acting provincial police director, dismissed allegations that the latest revival of jueteng here had the blessings of local and police officials.

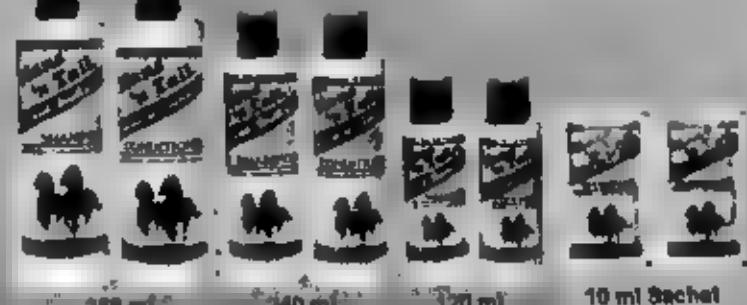
He said he has given instructions to all chiefs of police to arrest people involved in illegal gambling and file charges in court.



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'CLOSURE' at the demolished village of Guinsaugon marks the start of the long road to healing.

Closure rites end search, start healing in St. Bernard

From page A1

But for 15-year-old Maries Abiol, Lerial's plea was hard to accept and even harder to understand. The fourth-year high school student lost both parents, a brother, a sister and the only home she has ever known. She is alone save for a brother, Jay-R, who's 16.

So alone

"I have been crying since the tragedy. It is hard for me to accept our fate. My brother and I feel so alone. We don't have the strength to live ... without them," she said, her face in

Abiol was among the 98 youngsters orphaned by the tragedy. She and about eight other orphans under the care of Hope Worldwide-Philippines returned to St. Bernard yesterday, lit candles and offered prayers for all those who perished in the mudslide.

Moises Velasco, program manager of Hope Worldwide-Philippines, said it would take at least three months for Abiol and other survivors to "partially overcome their trauma."

"They are still in the grieving phase. And we are helping them recover from the trauma by giving them some psycho-social treatment," he said.

Wooden cross

The rites began at 9 a.m. with a Mass officiated by Bishop Precioso Cantillas of the Diocese of Maasin. A 15-foot wooden cross was erected with the prelate declaring the place as "a place of memorial and prayer where Eucharistic Mass can be celebrated."

Cantillas implored the people not to blame God for the tragedy, because God is "good and merciful ... and He will continue to be good and merciful even if the world and the universe will be gone," the prelate said in his homily.

Two military helicopters flew by, sprinkling holy water and showering the site with flower petals.

"It's a message of love, concern and hope for those who were left behind," Lerial said.

Closure

She said the memorial rites, while symbolically closing the search and retrieval operation, also signaled the start of an effort to rebuild the lives of survivors.

"We have a long way to go. But I told them we can overcome all of this together," Lerial said in an interview after the ceremony that lasted until 1 p.m. yesterday.

Sen. Richard Gordon, who was present as national president of the Philippine National Red Cross, said he hopes the survivors can rebuild their lives as others have after the Mount Pinatubo eruption and the Ormoc tragedy.

As part of the rebuilding effort, Lerial said they would do their best to construct houses for the victims in a 7.2 hectare site in Barangay Magbagakag, around 3 km. from the St. Bernard town proper.

She said the local government was still processing the purchase of the lot that would house the 410 survivors from Guinsaugon and hundreds of other individuals from the neighboring three-and-a-half barangay affected by the mudslide.

Lerial said US Marines had already committed to build temporary shelters, kitchens, toilets and clinics for the victims in the new evacuation site.

More aid

Two weeks after the Southern Leyte tragedy, international aid continues to pour in for the survivors of the Feb. 17 landslide.

A hotel executive and some US servicemen stationed in South Korea had sent "sympathy letters" to the Philippine Embassy in Seoul, the Department of Foreign Affairs reported yesterday.

"I can't express enough how sorry I am for your country's loss," wrote one US soldier, who went unnamed in a DFA statement. "All my prayers are for the families of loved ones who suffered," wrote another.

Japan, Germany

Another consoling letter came from Kyung-Chak Chang, president of the five-star Lotte Hotel, the DFA said.

The Japanese Embassy yesterday approved the release of an additional P27 million to the Philippine government specifically to build "500 shelters" for the now homeless villagers of Barangay Guinsaugon.

This raised the total Japanese assistance for landslide victims to P38 million, the mission said.

The embassy earlier turned over emergency relief items worth P1 million to the Department of Social Welfare and Development, aside from sending damage-assessment and body identification experts to St. Bernard.

Through its embassy in Manila, the German government said it would provide P3.1 million in aid for the estimated 2,900 evacuees, including not only those directly hit by the Feb. 17 disaster but also families in neighboring villages now deemed facing the same threat.

"The people in the eight evacuation centers benefiting from the German humanitarian assistance include the former residents of Guinsaugon, those from two neighboring villages that were partially affected by the original landslides, and those from villages in the vicinity that have been preemptively evacuated," the mission said.

Thailand, Korea

On Thursday, the DFA received on behalf of the National Disaster Coordinating Council, a check worth \$100,000 (P5.2 million) from Thailand, also for the affected Leyteños.

Philippine Ambassador to Seoul Susan Castrenze also reported to have received \$7,000 (P360,010) in cash donations from multi-sectoral donors in South Korea, as well as a pledge from Korean firm Kumho Tires to send donations in kind for reconstruction and rehabilitation efforts.

Among the latest donors from South Korea was National Tax Service Commissioner Jusung Lee, who gave \$2,000 (P102,860), and the Korea-Philippines Friendship Association which sent \$1,000 (P51,430). Pacific Asia Society, a non-government organization based in that country, gave \$250 (P12,857).

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Editor Ester G. Dipesupit

MEGALOTTO 6/45

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'Minor' blasts rock Pasig police offices

By Tessa V. Quimando

TWO MINOR BLASTS ROCKED A compound housing police offices near a commercial strip in Pasig City yesterday morning, creating suspensions the explosions could be linked to the current political unrest.

No one was injured, and no damage to property was reported.

The blasts occurred just as President Macapagal-Arroyo prepared to announce the lifting of Proclamation 1017 (state of national emergency), and before a scheduled protest march of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines on Meralco Avenue.

Hit by the consecutive explosions between 9:45 and 10 a.m. yesterday were detachments of the Regional Special Weapons and Tactics team (RSWAT), the Eastern Police District (EPD) Mobile Force, and the EPD Traffic Enforcement Unit in a compound on Meralco Avenue in Ortigas Center.

"We thought we were under attack because this is where we keep our rifles and ammunition," said RSWAT's Insp. Michael Chavez, one of eight members of the elite force

who was in the barracks when the explosions occurred.

Some people in the restaurant strip Metrowalk, across the police compound, scampered away because of the explosions, witnesses said.

"I thought it was part of the protests. We had been told to be careful of groups that might hold protests here," said Faye Ty, branch supervisor of a coffee shop in Metrowalk.

Police officials dismissed the incidents as isolated and "very minor." They said the explosives used were "of the gang-war type" and lacked sophisticated wiring or mechanisms.

Said Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao who was at the scene shortly after the incident: "It's a very, very minor explosion. We do not consider this a very big cause for alarm."

Lomibao said the motive for the incidents could not yet be established yet. "We do not know if the ones responsible are pranksters, or destabilizers, or just people who would like to create trouble."

The two explosives were planted on both sides of the row of container vans that served as police offices

The first blast created a small and shallow crater at the concrete base of an electric post on a sidewalk at Meralco Avenue.

The second explosion occurred less than a minute later and some 50 meters away from the scene of the first blast, behind a canteen at the far end of the police detachments' row.

After checking the area for other explosives, the EPD Explosives and Ordnance Division (EOD), found no other bombs. Ambulances and a fire truck were also sent to the area.

National Capital Region Police Office Director Vidal Querol said the blasts could have been an offshoot of a fraternity war.

The explosions suggested they were caused by simple pillboxes, he added.

"The motives, the groups responsible are matters to be investigated," Querol told reporters.

The incidents shut down traffic on the northbound lane of Meralco Avenue's stretch between Doña Julia Vargas and Ortigas Avenues, until investigators finished their work in the afternoon.



POLICE gather pieces of evidence of the blast near the Eastern Police District station.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Alleged 'shabu queen' nabbed in Taguig; children used as couriers

By Jocelyn R. Uy

A WOMAN SUSPECTED TO BE the "queen" of the illegal drugs trade in Taguig City, who allegedly employed children as young as eight years old in her business, was arrested by the police early

yesterday morning.

Alleged "shabu queen" Fe Bergonia, reportedly in hiding for two years, was arrested in her home on J.P. Rizal Street, Barangay Upper Bicutan, said Senior Insp. Eufronio Obong, chief of the city's Drug Enforcement Unit.

The police conducted a buy-bust operation at 3:45 a.m. following complaints from Bergonia's neighbors that she had recruited minors for her operations. An arrest warrant was issued for the suspect in 2004 for

violation of Section 5 of the Dangerous Drug Act since 2004. The suspect allegedly used children, aged 8 to 17, as drug couriers, Obong said. He added that children would sell 50 grams of methamphetamine hydrochloride, more popularly known as

shabu, on a daily basis.

Bergonia's operation was centered in Barangays Upper Bicutan and Ususan, where police raided last month what was described as a "smaller version" of the Pasig City shabu market which was the target of a raid by the Philippine

National Police on Feb. 10.

Councilor Henry Dueñas, head of the Taguig Anti-Crime and Illega Drugs Task Force, said they were still checking Bergonia's story that her shabu supply came from Quiapo, Manila.

PP 1017 didn't make ripple on citizenry

THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON agriculture and blue ribbon went overboard when it linked President Macapagal-Arroyo to the alleged misuse of the P728-million fertilizer fund.

By implicating the President in the alleged fund scam, the two Senate committees probably thought Agriculture Undersecretary Jocelyn "Joe-Joe" Bolante would come out of hiding to save his boss.

Bolante is the principal player in the reported irregularities. He has repeatedly ignored summonses from the Senate.

The two Senate committees say GMA's "failure to disprove the charges... suggest her culpability and involvement in this unforgivable act."

Whoa! How do you expect the President to disprove charges of a scam when she didn't have a hand in the fund's alleged illegal disbursement, if ever?

It's the same as implicating an employer in the theft committed by his/her household on a neighbor when the amo was ignorant of the maid's crime.

Oh, yes, GMA's fault was in not choosing her subordinates well. But implicating her in Bolante's alleged crime is going too far.

EXCEPT for the drama at the Marine headquarters in Fort Bonifacio, Presidential Proclamation No. 1017 came and went without creating a ripple on their humdrum existence of ordinary citizens.

The standoff in Fort Bonifacio gave the citizens vicarious adventure. But other than that, PP 1017 was just another presidential edict that didn't affect the citizenry.

Life was normal under the PP1017 that was lifted yesterday.

I DON'T know what evidence the government has on retired Maj. Gen. Ramon Montaño, former chief of the defunct Philippine Constabulary (PC), but arresting him without a warrant was a big mistake.

How could Montaño have taken part in the alleged coup plot when, by his own admission, he's too old for such an adventure?

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

BI officials, guards face charges for jailbreak

By Margaux C. Ortiz

A BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION (BI) OFFICIAL, a former warden and five jail guards assigned at the BI Detention Center in Bicutan, Taguig City, now face criminal and administrative charges in connection with the escape of three foreign detainees last December.

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) Special Task Force headed by Regional Director Reynaldo Esmeraldo will also conduct an investigation to determine the possible culpability of other BI officials and employees in the escape of Sri Lankan national Jayamahadev Mudalege, Don Keerthi Jayamaha-

raja, and Chinese suspects Tan Tin Shao and Go Sak Ping.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) fact finding committee headed by Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco recommended that jail guards Carlos Garcia, Antonio Tantay, Ray Abräu, Laeman Sulay and Arsenio Samson be immediately placed under preventive suspension after formal administrative charges were filed against them.

The committee likewise recommended that Garcia, Tantay and Abräu be charged criminally for infidelity in the custody of prisoners, obstruction of apprehension and prosecution of criminal offenders, and violation of

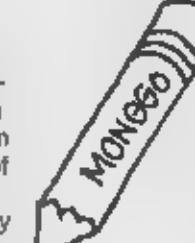
the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

Jail guards Sulay and Samson, who were absent but indicated in the BI logbook that they were "on duty" during the incident, face criminal charges for falsification by a public officer and violation of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act. The five guards also face administrative charges for dishonest and grave misconduct, according to the report.

Apart from facing similar administrative charges, the committee also recommended that BI intelligence division chief Faisal Hussin and former BI warden Popoy de Leon be charged for attempted bribery in exchange for the release of another detainee in 2001.

METROBRIEFS

Mongol fakes



THE POLICE seized thousands of counterfeit Mongol pencils worth nearly a million pesos in Manila on Thursday. This was one of the police's first accomplishments as the security situation in the country began "normalizing," a day before President Macapagal-Arroyo lifted the declaration of a nationwide emergency. Carrying search warrants, agents from the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group raided a warehouse on Juan Luna Street, reportedly owned by Nancy Go, in Binondo, Manila, and seized nearly 200,000 pieces of Mongol pencils. The pencils are exclusively manufactured in Venezuela City, and only in the Philippines. The seized pencils were reportedly manufactured in China and smuggled into the country, according to the CIDG-Anti-Fraud and Commercial Crimes Division.

Luis A. del Puerto

Case of the missing foot

ANIGHT foot in a nylon bag was discovered late Thursday night on the center island across the Casino Filipino in Parañaque City. But what authorities thought was the body part of a dismembered "chop-chop victim" turned out to be the amputated right foot of a diabetic woman. The woman's son, Ruben Alionzo, went to the office of Barangay Santo Niño in Parañaque to report that the bag that held his mother's right foot accidentally fell from their vehicle earlier that night, according to a report from the 1st Police Center for Aviation Security (PCAS) of the Philippine National Police-Aviation Security Group (PNP-ASG). Two men working at the PAIR PADS cargo across the Casino Island discovered the nylon bag at around 10 p.m. When the police opened the bag, they found one right foot packed in a black garbage bag inside a box. A check by the police led them to the barangay center where they learned that Alionzo had filed a report about his mother's missing foot. Supt. Rizaline Roxas, operations chief of the ASG-Airport Security Center, said that according to Alionzo, his mother's doctor allowed them to bring home the foot in case they wanted to bury it.



Nikko Dizon

Pink urinals have to go

ACTING on complaints of foul odor from Pasay City residents, Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad requested the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority to dismantle the pink urinals installed by the agency in the city. "The urinals are already defective as they are poorly maintained. The urine already spills into the streets," said Sanitation Asst. Supt. Rosendo Cabanay yesterday. There are around 17 urinals along the Natividad Road and Roxas Boulevard within the city limit. Cabanay said the local government would ask owners of commercial establishments in the city to provide rest rooms in the city streets.

Jocelyn R. Uy

Pawnshop robbery foiled

ALERT policemen foiled an attempt to rob the Commonwealth Pawnshop and Money Exchange along the Marcos Highway, San Roque, Marikina City on Thursday evening. City police chief Supt. Manuel Gaerlan said the suspects left behind an acetylene tank, a bolt cutter, hammer and other drilling tools. Gaerlan said they could have been involved in the series of pawnshop robberies in Metro Manila. The owner of the pawnshop, Ret. Col. Ely Ramos, told police he was about to enter the shop when he heard the sound of a drill from an adjacent unit. Responding policemen came to his call for help, but the suspects were able to escape shortly before the law enforcers arrived.

Nancy C. Carvalho

THE BETA Sigma fraternity, one of the largest Philippines-based fraternities with alumni chapters worldwide, has begun preparing for its 80th anniversary celebration this year with a series of activities with its theme "Beta Sigma Reaches Out to the World." Vic Ramos, president of the UP Beta Sigma Fraternity Alumni Association and former environment secretary, said that the jubilee celebration will be highlighted by week-long festivities to be led by the JP chapter starting July 7. The celebrations will then be capped by the Diamond Jubilee Ball on July 14. Rico Arranz, one of the surviving founding members, was appointed chair of the Advisory Board of the Jubilee celebrations, with Frankie Llaguno, JJ Jayne, and Jimmy Yambao. Teddy Ray was also named Jubilee Commission chair. Among the activities lined up are art exhibits, a golf tournament, and on-the-spot figure painting. For details, call the UP Beta Sigma Fraternity Alumni Association secretariat at 7404533, Telefax 7235334 or visit the website www.upbeta-sigma.info.

Beta Sigma jubilee

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FOR the first two months of this year, collections by the Bureau of Customs surpassed those in the same months last year despite the unstable economic climate.

The reason for this is that the new chief, Napoleon Morales, and his deputy, Celso Templo, are old hands at the customs bureau.

Morales and Templo know the ins and outs in the bureau. They know when to make apprehensions and when to be lenient with imported cargo.

The result is that there are more importations. And importations result in more tariffs.

SMUGGLING can never be eliminated at the piers and the customs zones. But it can be minimized.

The Morales-Templo tandem has been able to reduce smuggling to the barest minimum.

Why? Because the two have orders from Malacañang to arrest people who drop the name of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo who want to engage in smuggling.

RADIO and television tend to exaggerate news on bombing incidents.

The reported explosion at the Metrowalk mall on Ortigas yesterday did not take place at the mall itself but near the police detachment outside the mall.

Witnesses said black smoke billowed from the blast. The detachment is manned by SWAT cops. From the looks of it, the explosion was caused by a smoke grenade used against unruly demonstrators or hostage-takers.

Now, guess who is allowed to carry smoke grenades?

Caloocan defers payment of property tax

By Nancy C. Carvalho

CALOOCAN CITY PROPERTY OWNERS have something to be happy about these days.

The implementation of the .5 percent tax rate increase of commercial and industrial land in the city has been temporarily suspended for two years starting this year, according to an ordinance approved by the city council.

The ordinance, which was unanimously approved by members of the council on Jan. 10, covers real property taxes for 2006 and 2007.

At present, the city government collects one percent in real property taxes from the owners.

Based on Republic Act 7160, the city government was authorized to impose a basic real property tax rate not exceeding two percent of the assessed value of the real property.

According to the ordinance, real property owners would only start paying 1.5 percent in real property taxes starting 2008.

The decision to defer the increase was made following persistent public clamor and petitions from different sectors, according to City Mayor Enrico Echiverri.

He said the move would lessen the effect of increases in the prices of goods, labor, cost of living, crude oil, and other basic needs.

"It would also cushion the impact in the implementation of the expanded value added tax," the mayor added.

He said that it is also the local government's way of expressing its gratitude to those who pay the right taxes on time.

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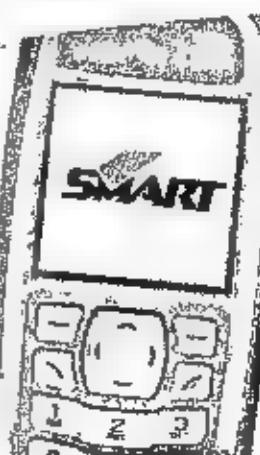
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Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres

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Gabi guns for world titles today

RP flyweight fights champ Darchinyan in California

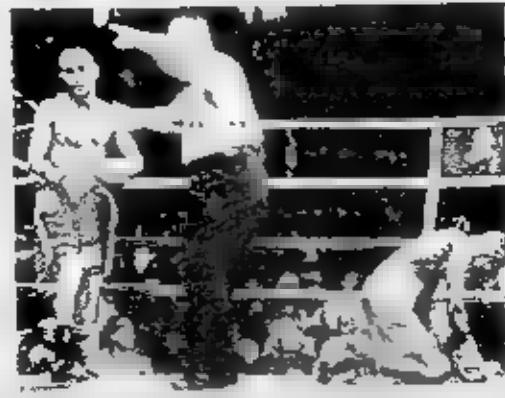
DIOSDADO GABI ATTEMPTS to become the only Filipino with two world crowns today when he challenges IBF and IBO flyweight king Vic Darchinyan at the Chumash Resort Casino in Sta. Ynez, California.

The 12-round rumble will be aired live by Solar Sports starting at 12:30 p.m. with a replay at 9:30 tonight.

At yesterday's weigh-in, held at the Chumash Resort Casino, Gabi came in at a trim 111 lbs, while Darchinyan, the Armenia-born champ from Sydney, Australia, tipped the scales at exactly 112 lbs.

An all-American cast of officials have been appointed by the International Boxing Federation for the 12-round battle, with David Mendoza the third man on the ring.

Darchinyan has vowed to knock out Gabi,



HEAVY FAVORITE: Armenia-born Vic Darchinyan (left) being directed to a neutral corner, during his last win by knockout.

but if he fails, Lou Moret, David Denkin and Pat Russell will render judgment.

The bout has been billed as a battle between talented southpaws. Darchinyan has scored six consecutive bouts by knockout.

Gabi, who has never been knocked out, has

won his last 12 bouts, including eight by KO.

The Filipino will come into the fight wearing a robe with the Philippine tri-colors. His trunks will be in a blue-red-gold combo.

Boxing icon Manny Pacquiao had extended his good luck message to his gym mate Gabi, who will be assisted in his corner by Pacquiao's trainer Freddie Roach, cutman Joe Chavez, assistant trainer Eric Brown and manager Michael Koncz.

"This fight is for my country, my city (Davao), and my family," Gabi said in Filipino. "I will leave everything on the ring."

He will pray at a local church in California today before proceeding to the fight venue.

It will be a tough assignment for Gabi, though, as he faces an undefeated champion considered as the world's hardest-punching flyweight today.

The cocky Darchinyan (24-0, 19 KOs) had predicted a knockout win over Gabi, even asking the latter to choose the round when he would be kayoed.

Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor



DIOSDADO GABI (left) faces a certified knockout artist in his most important fight to date. Manny Pacquiao's trainer, Freddie Roach, will be in his corner.

| TALE OF THE TAPE | |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| VIC DARCHINYAN | DIOSDADO GABI |
| Australia | Country |
| 24-0 (19 KO's) | Record |
| 79% | KO Percentage |
| 30 | Age |
| 165.5 cm | Height |
| 5'5 1/2" | Height |
| 112 | Weight |
| Southpaw | Stance |
| 1 | Wins in First Rd |
| | 8 |

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SPORTS

SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 2006

Rodriguez selected first overall in PBL draft

By Jasmine W. Payo

WITH TEAMS PASSING UP THE FIRST ROUND of selection because of their intact lineups, there were only a handful of talents who got passes to the Philippine Basketball League yesterday.

Larry Rodriguez was the first name in that short list.

Montaña Pawnshop made the Philippine Maritime Institute standout the number one pick, believing in his potential to be a top player in the future.

The 6-foot-4 forward from Tondo, who led the

56 aspirants seeking slots in PBL rosters, will join the Jewels' roster of versatile big men when the 2006 Utro Cup kicks off on March 25.

"He's a good player, he can play at the post and has a good touch from the perimeter," said assistant coach Nel Parado. "He has the makings of a top player because of his speed and agility."

Toyota Otis, the cellar dweller last conference, acquired the first pick but passed up the chance to beef up its squad. Heroes Cup champion Magnolia Ice Cream, runner-up Rain or Shine and Harbour Centre also begged off in the first round.

As a result, only 12 players were picked in yes-

terday's exercise.

Hapee-PCU selected Bejun Lapera, a 5-foot-9 guard from the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, making him the second overall pick.

Granny Goose chose Eder Saldua third overall, while league newcomer TeleTech wrapped up the first round by selecting Eleanario Labitang of World City Colleges.

Montaña acquired 6-foot-3 Jesse James Coaldo of the University of Cincinnati in the second round. Raffy Fabie went to Hapee-PCU, Ryan Espacio to Granny Goose, Peimer Jaboli to Rain or Shine and Henzel Tabladillo to TeleTech.

The draft ended in the third round with Josias Catacutan going to Granny Goose, Aries Sta. Mana to Rain or Shine and Don Yu to TeleTech.

Teams also absorbed several players from the dispersal draft after Far Eastern Insurance decided to pull out in the coming conference.

TeleTech, which will be mentored by debuting coach Jerry Coduera, hopes Don Villamin, Jay Sierra and Mel Latorena can provide the experience in its maiden campaign.

Veteran Christian Coronel will again suit up for Toyota Otis, while 6-foot-8 center Lawrence Bonus will join Montaña.

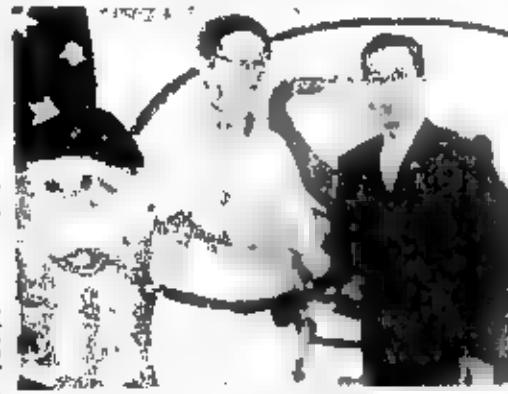
Reyes wants Asiad stint for RP team

Bulls to keep fire burning

By June Navarro

THE PROBLEM WITH BEING A CHAMPION team is losing the hunger to win in the next tournament. Red Bull hopes to be different.

Learning from the misfortune that befell San Miguel Beer last conference, Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao said his team will keep the hunger alive in



MARIO Mamon, president and CEO of Enchanted Kingdom (left), and PBA commissioner Noli Eala recently signed an agreement in which both parties agree to do promotional activities to promote the league and vice versa starting with the Gran Matador Brandy-PBA Philippine Cup.

the PBA All-Filipino Cup set to open tomorrow at the Araneta Coliseum.

"We want to keep the hunger in us alive," said Guiao, whose team is coming off a championship conquest of Purefoods in the 2006 Fiesta Conference. "The desire to win should always be there."

The Beermen finished eighth last conference after capturing the 2005 Fiesta Conference. The Bulls succeeded them as champions, finishing off Purefoods in six games of a race-to-four affair.

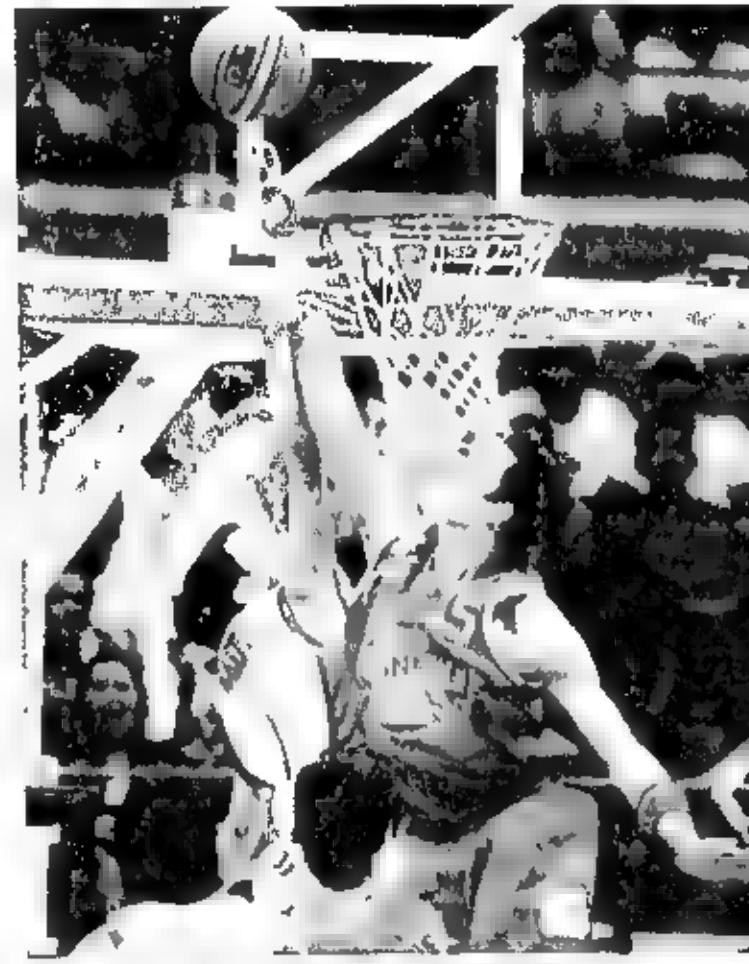
Red Bull, though, looks headed for an uphill climb in its bid for a back-to-back, a feat last achieved by current Philippine Cup defending champion Ginebra.

"The race is so wide open," said Guiao. "Just like in the Fiesta Conference, the top four remains to be Talk N Text, Ginebra, San Miguel and Alaska," said Guiao.

"Of course, there's Air21," he added. "Who knows what kind of miracle it will do this time. Purefoods and our team are just in the middle of the pack," he added.

In an effort to beef up their frontline, the Bulls added the energetic Rich Alvarez in the power forward rotation. Alvarez is reunited with former Arenero teammates Rico Villanueva, Larry Fonacier and Paolo Bugia.

That trade with the Alaska Aces for two first-round picks in 2006 and 2007 has attracted more attention than usual.



AFTER winning the Fiesta Conference via a bruising series against Purefoods, Red Bull eyes a second straight crown.

PDI PHOTO

PBA launches new fan promo

A GENERAL ASSEMBLY IS SET TODAY AT GERRY'S GRILL FOR ALL THOSE who wish to join the PBA's latest promo, FAN-T-ASTIG, which aims to organize fan clubs under one umbrella group. The project will not only give fan clubs an air of exclusivity but also give its members a chance to have a little income through networking. Meanwhile, conference and loyalty tickets and privilege membership cards for the season-ending meet are now available at the PBA booking office. For details, call Nestor Noblejas or Gerry Mesias at 636-5320 to 21.

THE ASIAN GAMES MAY NOT BE PART OF the agreement that serves as a basis for the formation of the national pool currently training under coach Chot Reyes.

But just the same, the squad is currently preparing for the quadrennial meet to be held in Doha, Qatar, this year.

His main reason? The country has a shot at winning the title with China's Yao Ming expected to skip the event because of his NBA commitment.

"I read in the papers that Yao Ming is definitely seeing action in this year's world championship in Japan and if this is so, it is likely that he will not be allowed by the Houston Rockets (Yao's team in the NBA) to also play in the Asian Games," Reyes said at the Scoop sa Kamayan yesterday.

"I don't think there is any team stronger than China in Asia with Yao Ming there. But without him, any team including the Philippines has a chance to win in the Asian Games," he reasoned out, adding that the absence of the 7-foot-5 Chinese behemoth will make Korea, Qatar and Libya as the teams to beat in any Asian tournament.

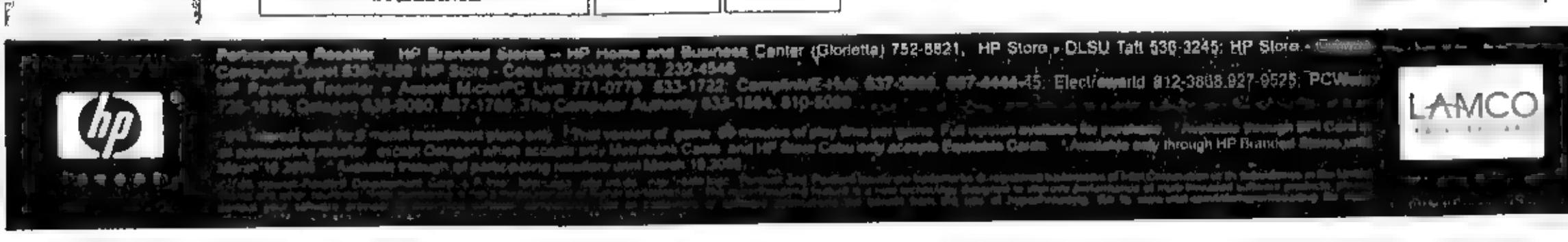
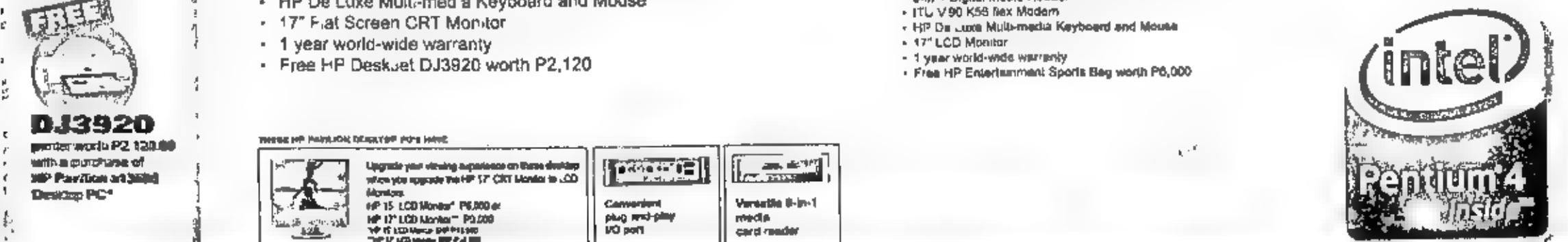
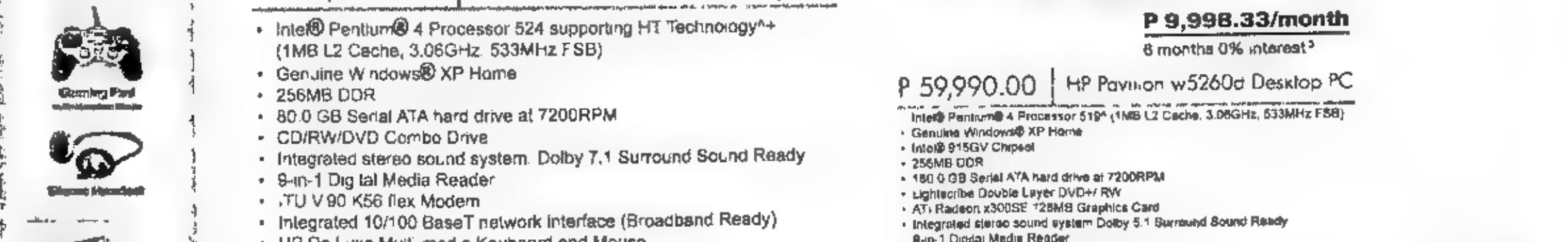
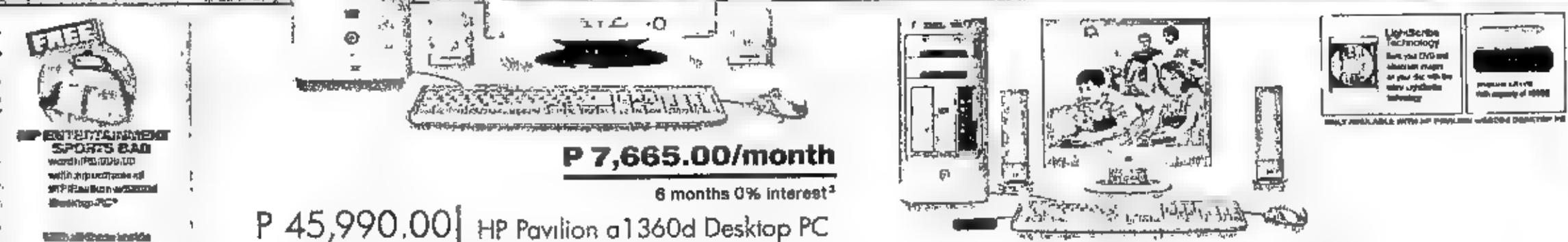
"And we have, to a certain extent, beaten these teams before so there is the possibility that we can beat them again."

Reyes also hopes to put on a show for the Filipinos working in Qatar.

"I want to give our kababayan in Qatar what they missed in last Fiba-Asia championship where we were supposed to play," he said, recalling how many Filipinos there have been eagerly awaiting a stint by their favorite players.

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SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 2006

RP coach gives Amit even chance vs rated foe

FILIPINO RUBLEN
Amit stands on equal footing with world-ranked Charlotte Sorensen of Denmark.

National women's coach Edgardo Asonto gave this assessment yesterday before Amit, the 2005 Southeast Asian Games double-gold medalist, faced Sorensen, rated No. 41 among women, in the quarterfinal round of the 2006 WPA Amway Women's World 9-Ball Championship at the Taiper Stadium in Taiwan.

"I believe that Rublen has an even chance against her Danish foe," Asonto said. "She did it in the SEA Games last December, with fighting heart she can do it again."

The amiable Amit advanced to the race-to-7, winner's-break quarterfinals slated at 7 p.m. today, racking a 3-2 win-loss record in Group D, which was topped by Jasmine Ouchin of Austria with a perfect 5-0 record.

Amit, playing under the auspices of sportsman



AMIT: Dangerous foe

Aristeo "Putch" Puyat and Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines president Ernesto "Ernie" Rajardo, was a wild card entry in the \$70,000-tournament as sponsor's choice.

Another Filipino, Johanna "The Captain" Dee, failed to advance after losing three elimination-round games to Malaysian Esther SY Kwan, 7-4; Taiwanese Lin Shu-ling, 7-0; and Japanese Nouchi Masami, 7-2, respectively.

Ouchin and reigning titlist Kim Ga-young of South Korea (5-0), lead the top eight players who advanced outright. Also seeded were Chang Shuh-an of Chinese-Taipei, No. 4 Chiharu Kawahara of Japan, 5 Akimi Kajitani of Japan, No. 6 Hyun Won of Korea, No. 7 Line Kjorsvik of Norway and No. 8 Jeannie Seaver of the US.

Amit and the other 15 finalists go through the single-elimination yesterday.

In the 2004 Austria edition of the Women's World 9-ball, lone Filipino Iris Rañola landed 44th among 48 entries.

Meanwhile, Asonto accompanied Rañola to the Games and Amusements Board yesterday to get a professional license. Amit and Rañola are competing in the Japan Open on March 15. Marlon Bernardino, contributor

Nash's MVP chances bright; All-Star Game losing luster

By Percy D. Della

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA—SPENT TWO hours and change on a cold and rainy night Wednesday watching the National Basketball Association on cable television.

Steve Nash scored 23 points in 34 minutes as the Phoenix Suns destroyed the Milwaukee Bucks, 123-110, at home.

After the game, TNT analyst Doug Collins, pronounced Nash his choice for the Most Valuable Player race this year.

"Steve has my vote so far," said Collins, a former NBA player and coach. He said no conversation about the MVP award this season can begin without mentioning the incumbent.

The 6-foot 3 Nash, a Canadian of South African descent, won hands down last year.

Despite losing two starters and center Amare Stoudemire to injury for the first 52 games, the Suns, led by Nash, have not only remained a major force in the Western Conference. They now sit on top of their division at 38 wins and 17 losses.

Often mentioned to give Nash a run for the MVP trophy are Kobe Bryant of the Los Angeles Lakers, LeBron James of the Cleveland Cavaliers, Chauncey Billups of the Detroit Pistons and Dirk Nowitzki of the Dallas Mavericks.

COMMENTARY

To shore up the game's sagging image, NBA commissioner David Stern has come up with a solution. He has engineered a move to hold the All-Star Game in Las Vegas next year.

Stern calls the 2007 game "a merger between the basketball capital of the world and the entertainment capital of the world."

Las Vegas is America's largest metro market without a professional sports team.

Gavin Maloof, who with his brothers own the Sacramento Kings and The Palms, a Las Vegas hotel and casino, welcomed the All-Star Game with open arms.

"It would be the biggest event since Elvis," Maloof told the USA Today newspaper.



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10

Tiger feasts on Blue Monster, grabs 1-shot lead

MIAMI—TIGER WOODS BIRDIED FIVE HOLES in a six-hole stretch along the back nine of the Blue Monster Thursday, shooting an 8-under 64 to take a one-shot lead over Phil Mickelson and four others after the first round of the Ford Championship at Doral.

In a balmy start to the Florida swing of the US PGA Tour's schedule, Woods reached the 603-yard 12th hole in two for his second of five birdies and picked up strokes on Nos. 14, 15 and 16 to sit one shot ahead of Colombia's Camilo Villegas, Rich Beem, Ryan Palmer, Mark Wilson and Mickelson.

"This guy Tiger seems to play well every day, every week," Mickelson said. "I'm just trying to keep pace. I'm trying to maybe have another shot at dueing out with him on Sunday, and I'm glad that he's playing well. I've got to do my part and stay with him."

The first round rekindled memories of last year, when Woods won a showdown with Mickelson, pulling ahead on a 30-foot birdie putt at No. 17 while Mickelson lipped out a birdie ch.p on the last hole.

On Thursday, 60 players broke 70 and 116 players were at par or better.

"The times I looked at the board, neither one of us were up there," Woods said.

Woods got off to a hot start on a tropical afternoon Thursday with birdies on three of his first four holes, including a tee shot to within a foot on the 222-yard fourth hole. Mickelson, who started on the back nine, made three straight birdies around the turn, and while his gallery was about one-fourth the size of those watching Woods, they were as passionate as ever.

There were throaty cheers when Mickelson made a 12-foot birdie on No. 5, and one man yelled, "Yeah! He's letting Tiger know that

he's coming!"

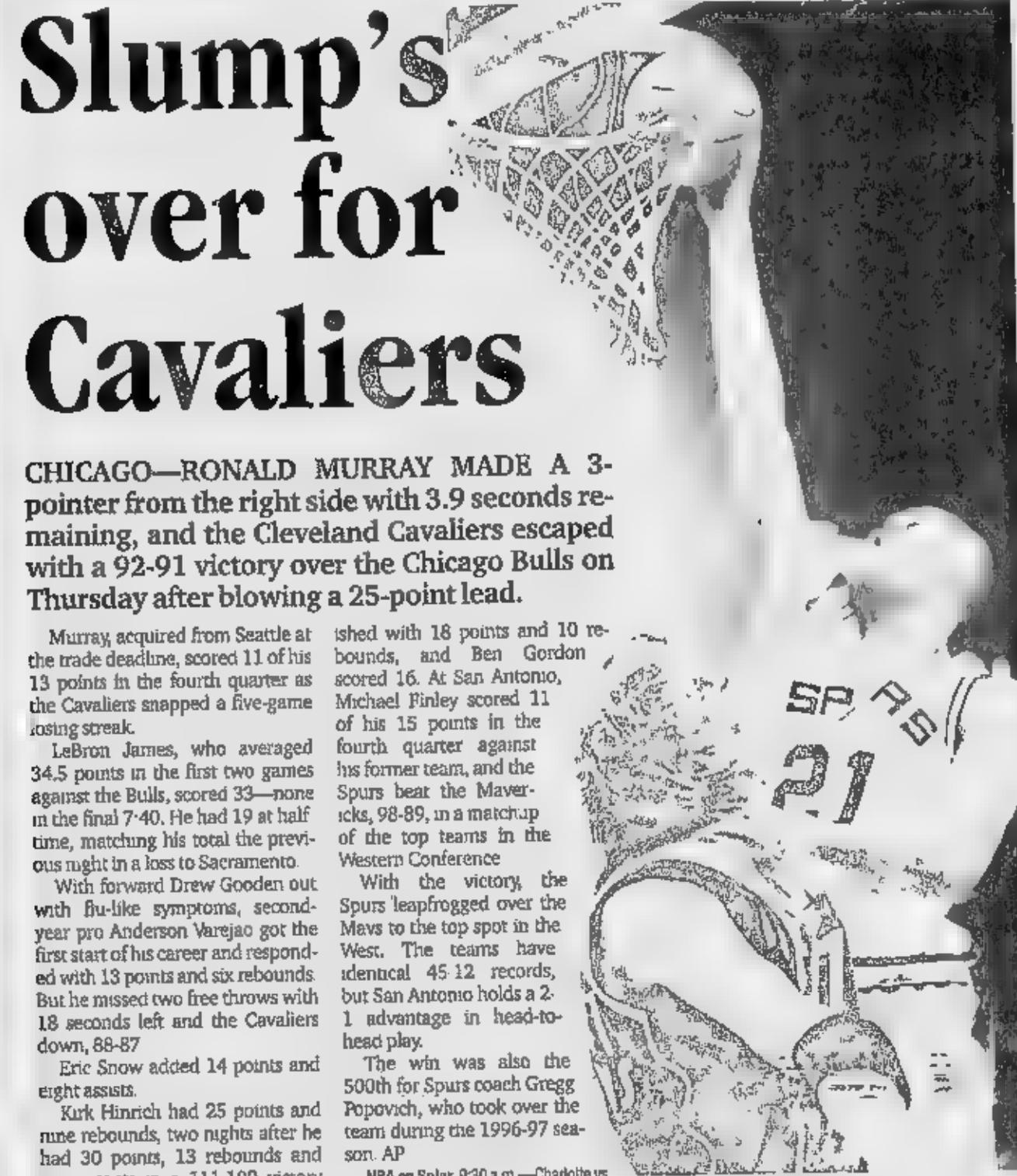
At that point, Woods was only about 250 yards away as he walked down the 14th fairway. He hit wedge into 10 feet, the start of three straight birdies that gave him the lead. His 64 was his best score in the first round on the US PGA Tour since a 63 in the 2003 Western Open, which he went on to win by five.

Villegas, one of several promising rookies, overcame a bogey-4 at No. 4 with an eagle on the 528-yard, par-5 eighth and birdied four straight holes until settling for a two-putt par from about 8 feet on the 18th. That put him at 65.



WOODS

AP



TIM Duncan soars for a dunk.

CHICAGO—RONALD MURRAY MADE A 3-pointer from the right side with 3.9 seconds remaining, and the Cleveland Cavaliers escaped with a 92-91 victory over the Chicago Bulls on Thursday after blowing a 25-point lead.

Murray, acquired from Seattle at the trade deadline, scored 11 of his 13 points in the fourth quarter as the Cavaliers snapped a five-game losing streak.

LeBron James, who averaged 34.5 points in the first two games against the Bulls, scored 33—none in the final 7:40. He had 19 at half time, matching his total the previous night in a loss to Sacramento.

With forward Drew Gooden out with flu-like symptoms, second-year pro Anderson Varejao got the first start of his career and responded with 13 points and six rebounds. But he missed two free throws with 18 seconds left and the Cavaliers down, 88-87.

Eric Snow added 14 points and eight assists.

Kirk Hinrich had 25 points and nine rebounds two nights after he had 30 points, 13 rebounds and nine assists in a 111-100 victory over Minnesota. Luol Deng fin-

ished with 18 points and 10 rebounds, and Ben Gordon scored 16. At San Antonio, Michael Finley scored 11 of his 15 points in the fourth quarter against his former team, and the Spurs beat the Mavericks, 98-89, in a matchup of the top teams in the Western Conference.

With the victory, the Spurs leapfrogged over the Mavs to the top spot in the West. The teams have identical 45-12 records, but San Antonio holds a 2-1 advantage in head-to-head play.

The win was also the 500th for Spurs coach Gregg Popovich, who took over the team during the 1996-97 season. AP

NBA on Solar 9:30 a.m.—Charlotte vs. Dallas (replay at 7:30 p.m.)

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PER DTI-NCR PERMIT #1243 SERIES OF 2006

Fed Golf's latest swing is called Tee-Off

THE FEDERATION of Golf Clubs, the largest organization of private golf clubs in the country, and Swing Magazine, the official Philippine golf magazine published by Hinge Inquirer Publications, team up to produce a bi-monthly newsletter called Tee-Off.

Each member of the 32 Federation golf clubs will receive a copy of Tee-Off, which hopes to bring the golfing community closer together by sharing news and information between the clubs.

Holding the biggest nationwide tournament of the summer is the best way to celebrate the partnership, so the Federation and Swing put together the National Team Shootout 2006. The Shootout brings team-



READY TO TEE OFF: From left, lawyer Tim Abejo II, Fed Golf director Michael Osmeña, Fed Golf chair and Sports commissioner Richie Garcia, HIP president Dave Valdes, Fed Golf president Rogelio Manalo, and HIP SVP and general manager Poch Bermudez.

play to the world of golf by adopting the four-man scramble format in three stages—club, regional satellite, and national levels. A fabulous all expense paid golf holiday to the Spring City Gold resort in Kunming, China, awaits the winning foursome.

Details will be available at all Federation Golf Clubs, selected pros and from Swing Magazine or www.swing.ph.

NBC inaugural features Tagaytay vs Pangasinan

EXPANSION TEAMS BATANG TAGAYTAY and Pangasinan Hundred Islands will square off when the third season of the National Basketball Conference unwraps on March 10 at the Tagaytay Sports Center.

The Tagaytay squad of Mayor and NBC executive vice president Bembol Tolentino will be led by veterans McDonald Santos, Rodel Mallari, Paolo Malonzo, Arden Guyab, Joel Finuliar and Rey Ober and rookie Tito Reyes. It will be mentored by former Micaa and PBA cager Ramir Bayot.

Completing Tagaytay's roster are Ian Pellejera, Gian Carlo Yabut, Eric Larica, Jen Bayot, Don Mordeno, Nelson Genido and Maurice Lascaña.

Pangasinan counts on NBC veterans and ex-pros. Among them are former Baguio Lions star Melvin Fontanilla, Jun Balares, Efren Valdez, Ryan

Ico, 6-foot-9 beanpole Jason Tiengco, UM Hawks standout Ryan Regalado, Mike Dizon, Rey Paul Javier, Joye Sese, Randy Lopez, Chris Corbin, Melvin Mamaway, Steve Maricot, James Zuban and Michael Gonzales.

Veteran NBC mentor Jun da Jose will handle the team, assisted by Joseph Peñez, Allan Meimban and Angel Gunarang.

"We're preparing a grand opening for the league," said Mayor Tolentino, patron of other sports activities like cycling, boxing and chess.

NBC is supported by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Spring Cooking Oil, Molten, Nature's Spring and official cable carrier Prime Channel.

NBC president and national shooter Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla sees a more vibrant, exciting tournament this year.

Federer advances in Dubai tennis

DUBAI, UNITED Arab Emirates—Top-seeded Roger Federer had no trouble moving into the semifinals of the Dubai Open with a 6-3, 6-2 win against Robin Vik on Thursday.

A showdown between the top two players in the world became a possibility when second-seeded Rafael Nadal also advanced after ending wildcard Tim Henman's run with a 7-6 (1), 6-1 victory.

Switzerland's Federer will meet Mikhail Youzhny in the semifinals after the Russian cruised to an easy 6-3, 6-1 win over Olivier Rochus of Belgium.

Nadal will be up against Rainer Schüttler of Germany, a 6-4, 6-1 winner over compatriot Bjorn Phau, who had knocked out Andre Agassi in the second round.

Federer, champion here for the past three years, was dominating against Vik, winning five break points out of six.

Nadal was playing only his second event since winning the ATP Masters Series in Madrid last October because of an injury. AP

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SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 2006

Brian Viloria: The real Pinoy

IN HUDDLE



Beth Celis

ALTHOUGH THE Philippines has yet to win its first Olympic gold, not too many people probably know that the country has produced a Filipino Olympic gold medalist in Victoria Manalo Draves.

This piece of invaluable data was relayed to me only the other day by San Francisco-based Dr. Christian Bocobo, my co-author of the book "Legends and Heroes of Philippine Basketball."

Christian said he came across this info through the Internet. He doesn't remember the year, but Vicki, as he and her contemporaries call her, won in the diving event, according to him.

The gold was never credited to the Philippines because Vicki was an American citizen and earned the colors of the United States.

Immediately, I called trivia man Bong Barrameda who I know is only one of the very few who could fill in the blanks and provide me with more info on Draves.

To start with, I wanted to know if Draves was her married name, because Christian had referred to her as Vicki Manalo.

"Vicki married her diving coach whose surname is Draves," said Bong who couldn't remember the coach's first name. "And she won two golds, not just one," Bong corrected.

"Vicki swept the two diving events, platform and springboard, in the 1948 London Olympics. She was the first female diver to sweep the two events, if I remember correctly," said the country's greatest researcher, the same guy who produces for television events of such magnitude as the Asian Games and the Olympics.

I forgot to ask if he witnessed this event personally, but according to Bong, Vicki visited the Philippines after the Olympics where she participated in a diving exhibition at the Rizal Memorial swimming pool.

"Nagkaroon pa naga ng motorcade when she arrived," Bong related. "She was feted by no less than Elpidio Quirino who was the president then."

Gosh, that was a long, long time ago because the rate of exchange during Quirino's time was only two pesos to a US dollar.

Bong isn't sure, but he said Draves could be guilty of robbing the country's two Olympic golds.

Although she was raised in the US, Vicki, whose father is Filipino (from Oran, Batangas) and whose mother is British, could have become an American citizen only after she married her coach, according to Bong, who describes the last as a "Tita Duran look-alike."

WBC light flyweight champ Brian Viloria's situation would have drawn a parallel, had he won the gold in the 2000 Sydney Olympics, where he competed.

Unlike Vicki, though, Brian is a full-blooded Filipino, if not a full-blooded slob, whose values remain Filipino.

"We respect our elders, we never talk back and we obey our parents. At dusk, all of us kids are expected to be in the house and we all follow this rule. I have had my share of whackings from my dad's belt when I've been a bad boy," related Brian who would never dream of calling 911 to report his dad for child abuse, like American kids do, faced with a similar situation.

Brian delighted sportswriters with his wit and gift of gab during a mini press conference at Oakland last Thursday.

Brian said he had tried other disciplines like judo, wrestling, table and lawn tennis, but none made his adrenalin flow as much as boxing.

"Even my own manager Gary Gittersohn has advised me to get out of boxing if I could, because it was too dangerous, but I just couldn't. It's my passion," Brian said.

While his father Ben chooses not to talk him out of his chosen sport, he admits that he freezes up every time Brian is in action.

"More than the actual bouts, what really scares me is the sparring. Kasi yung mga kriabang niya sa arena, fights, kasing lit lang niya. Yung mga ka-spar niya, malatik di hamak sa kanya," Ben said.

Brian at 25, is unattached. He doesn't even have a girlfriend because "right now, I'm married to boxing," a sport which he would've given up had Ruben Contreras, the Mexican fighter whom he sent into a coma with his deadly punches last year, died.

"I had sleepless nights after that fight. I kept thinking of Contreras' family. What would happen to them if he died. I would never have forgiven myself."

It was also Contreras who gave him back his career because he recovered completely. The incident is behind him now.

If Manny Pacquiao chose to Jericho Rosales to portray him in a film about his life, who would Brian pick to portray him?

"Ogie Alcasid!" Brian replied without batting an eyelash. "They say I look very much like him."



SARAGOZA: Despite a double bogey on No. 6

SPORTS

Saragoza seizes command with 72

LIPA CITY - BOYET SARAGOZA OVERCAME A DOUBLE-BOGEY on the sixth hole en route to an even-par 72 yesterday and snatched a one-stroke lead over first-round leader Michael Bibat halfway through the Samsung Amateur Golf Tour grand finals at the Summit Point Golf and Country Club here yesterday.

The 33-year-old Saragoza, one down at the start of the day, quickly tied Bibat with a birdie on No. 3 but yielded two shots on No. 6. Saragoza fought back with three more birdies to cushion two other bogeys for nine of 36-36 at the water-laced Robert Trent Jones Jr.-designed layout.

That was Saragoza's second straight 72 as he moved in front with a 144, one shot clear of Bibat, who failed to recover from a 38 start and wound up with 74.

Golfer Tonton Asistio actually dished out the

strongest among the five championship division finalists, going two-under after nine holes to gain a share of the lead with Saragoza. But he bogeyed No. 11, dropped two strokes on No. 15 before losing another stroke on No. 17. He settled for a second straight 74 and 148, four off Saragoza in the tournament sponsored by Samsung and backed by Philippine Airlines, Tokyo Tokyo, KZG, Microtel, Coppertone Sport, Sunbolt, Rudy Project, C Lium Fiber and Sports Plus. Media partners are Wave 89.1, Jam 88.3, 89.9, 99.5 RT, 103.5 K-Lite and Killer Bee.

Meanwhile, 35 qualifiers clash in a 36-hole duel in various divisions for men and ladies beginning today.

Erwin Vinuan, a Nomura Cup veteran, shot a one-over par 73 but remained six strokes adrift with a 150, while Jong Laput skied to an 82 and is out of it with 158.

W. Wack ladies shut out Highlands in Fed Golf

STANDINGS (Win-Draw-Loss-Points)

Group I - Wack Wack 5-0-0-11, Highlands 4-0-1-10; Southwoods 2-0-3-5, Orchard 2-0-4-4, Northwoods 1-0-5-2.

Group II - Riviera 4-1-1-6.5, Forest Hills 2-1-1-5.5, Alabang 1-2-1-3.5, Sta. Elena 1-0-3-2.

UNSTOPPABLE WACK WACK REPEATED over a visiting defending champion Tagaytay Highlands in rousing fashion recently to gain the edge in their tight race for the automatic semifinals berth in Group I of the Ladies Federation Golf League.

Vicky Farrales-Elo Campos (alternate shot), Bing Liboro-Nicole Serapio (high-low) and Claudette Santiago-

Katya dela Cruz (aggregate) all posted close victories for a crunching 3-0 sweep as Wack Wack nailed its fifth straight victory.

Getting a bonus point for the sweep that was more convincing than their previous win over Tagaytay in an away outing, the still unbeaten Wack Wack boosted its league-leading total to 11 points, one up on Tagaytay which suffered only its second loss in six matches.

The two frontrunning teams are far ahead of the pack in the chase for the semifinal slot in Group I as third-running Southwoods lies six points behind at 5 points.

In Group II, Riviera leads with 6.5 points after being held to a draw by a resurgent Alabang squad in its recent outing.

Forest Hills likewise boosted its own semifinal bid with a 2.5-0.5 trashing of a slumping Sta. Elena.

Forest Hills moved up to sole second with 5.5 points, including the extra point earned from the win, which was its second in four games.

Irene Dy-Grace Atenica (alternate shot) and Jee Cabochan-Nelda Roguel (high-low) won their respective matches while Violy Pegels-Lily Young split the aggregate point with Alice Jose-Lily Chan for Forest's needed points.

The top three teams from each group

will advance to the playoff rounds with the teams topping their respective groups getting outright passage to the semifinals. The four remaining teams will go through the quarterfinals following the same home-and-away format, with the No. 3 seed facing No. 6 and No. 4 battling No. 5.

The winner of the duels between the third and sixth seeds will face the No. 2 seed, and the victor of the playoff involving the fourth and fifth seeds collide with the top seed in the semifinals.

While Wack Wack and Tagaytay are dominating their group, it's still a close fight in the other group going into the last three rounds of the eliminations.

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AND OUR OWN GLENN AGUILAR

TOUR DETAILS:

ROUND 1 - FEBRUARY 19, 2006 - TESLA SAHARA EXPO CENTER
ROUND 2 - MARCH 5, 2006 - SANTA BARBARA FAIR STADIUM, LUCEDALE, MS

Taste the adventure.

No minors allowed. Open to persons 18 years old and above only. Organizer reserves the right to refuse entry to those without ID or proof of age.

**Government Warning:
Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.**

Brian at 25, is unattached. He doesn't even have a girlfriend because "right now, I'm married to boxing," a sport which he would've given up had Ruben Contreras, the Mexican fighter whom he sent into a coma with his deadly punches last year, died.

"I had sleepless nights after that fight. I kept thinking of Contreras' family. What would happen to them if he died. I would never have forgiven myself."

It was also Contreras who gave him back his career because he recovered completely. The incident is behind him now.

If Manny Pacquiao chose to Jericho Rosales to portray him in a film about his life, who would Brian pick to portray him?

"Ogie Alcasid!" Brian replied without batting an eyelash. "They say I look very much like him."

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Assistant Editor Rito P. Asilo

SATURDAY Special

Text us your feedback: Inquirer sat name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

NOW SHOWING

Hoffman mines Oscar gold in witty biopic

By Rito P. Asilo

"Capote"B: Bennett Miller
S: Philip Seymour Hoffman

PERSONAL DEMONS HAD CONSISTENTLY hounded Truman Capote (Philip Seymour Hoffman), the flamboyant author of 1965's "In Cold Blood," the pioneering nonfiction masterpiece about the massacre of the Clutter family at the hands of Perry Smith (Clifton Collins Jr.) and Richard Hickock (Mark Pellegrino).

Bennett Miller's outstanding biopic is not a birth-to-death chronicle of Capote's life and career, and focuses on a significant period: From "In Cold Blood's" conception to its publication six years later.

In the course of research, Truman's fascination with Smith drew out the author's moral ambiguity and confusion, and brought him his biggest success—and his eventual downfall. But, Capote's "infatuation" with his subject was not entirely selfish.

As he later explained: "It's like Perry and I grew up in the same house—and one day, he went out the back door, and I went out the front." Make no mistake: Smith and Hickock were guilty, and the book's title couldn't be more appropriate.

In the end, the distraught writer's confusion mirrors what we feel about life's confounding issues—knowing what's right and wrong, and hoping the hard choices we make will matter in the bigger scheme of things.

"Nasaan si Francis?"D: Gabby Fernandez
S: Epi Quizon, Christopher de Leon

Where is Francis (Epi Quizon)? Well, he is dead. And hapless crooks, Boy and Sonny (Paolo Contis and Rico Blanco, respectively), are in a mad rush to get their hands on their not-so-dearly departed friend's expensive drug stash hidden in the clutter of Francis' house.

Gabby Fernandez's directional debut possesses the frenetic wit and off-kilter humor that characterize the cinematic oeuvre of his mentors, Peque Gallaga and Lore Reyes. However, likable characters and fast-paced storytelling don't a satisfying movie make.

Despite its short running time (it clocks at one hour and 23 minutes), the novelty of the

narrative's dead-body premise swiftly loses steam—not unlike the kitschy running gag that likewise hobbled Ted Kotcheff's silly cautionary trifle, 1989's "Weekend at Bernie's."

Yes, this is comedy. But, even comedies need a plausible plot to maintain suspension of disbelief and rein in implausibilities.

The film, though, has a plus point that makes it immensely watchable: The out-of-the-box

performances of topnotch actors, who inhabit their characters with thespic flourish and feisty abandon—particularly Christopher de Leon, who works his stellar charm when the drug his character accidentally ingests starts to kick in. Rio Locsin is also a fun revelation as Bel, the abusive whorehouse madam.

Unfortunately, acting is just one of the many components that makes a movie work.

DE LEON.
Feisty and unpredictable.

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ



Face to face with Pilar Pilapil

By Nestor U. Torre

EVER SINCE SHE BECAME Binibining Pilipinas Universe when she was only 16 years old, Pilar Deliah Pilapil has fascinated the public.

Her stellar career, affairs with the rich and famous and so-called lifestyle have made her one of the most colorful and media-savvy personalities on the local scene for more than 30 years.

Surprising development

Of late, however, Pilar has pretty much kept to herself, staying away from Manila's mad media circus. But, it turns out that Pilar's life has gone into its most surprising development to date: She's dedicated herself to God, married a pastor, and finally found the peace and happiness that eluded her for decades.

Thus update comes from Pilar herself, by way of her newly-published autobiography, "The Woman Without A Face (The Life Story of Pilar Pilapil)"

The compact book is characterized by almost painful honesty, with Pilar citing the key events in her life that made her such an emotional wreck for so many years.

She also names names (well, first names, at least) when she writes about the famous men she's been involved with. Through all of this, however, we sense that she isn't blaming them for the mess her life occasionally became.

Indeed, she forthrightly declares that she's responsible for all the bad choices she's made, ill-advised decisions that sometimes sent her hurtling down a dead-end street.

Thus, despite the low blows that others have given her—the relative who traumatized her, the lovers who abused her, the holier-than-thou types who pealed her with psychologically bruising rocks.

Incendiary advantage

These, plus a suicide attempt, are scrupulously detailed in Pilar's autobiography—not to scorch its pages to incendiary advantage, but to make sense of her troubled life.

Helping Pilar in achieving this illumination

FACE/A2-2

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MATTHEW MACFADYEN BRENDAN BLUTHYN DONALD SUTHERLAND AND JUDI DENCH

NOW SHOWING



BAUTISTA. First
major solo concert at
Aliw Theater.

'Pop Heartthrob'

MARK BAUTISTA, THE former smalltown boy from Cagayan de Oro City, is finally starring in his first major solo concert at Aliw Theater on March 24. His special guests are Sarah Geronimo, Juris of MYMP, Ogie Alcasid and Rufa Mae Quinto.

Mark returns to his musical roots in his March 24 concert, "Pop Heartthrob." He'll also be expanding his repertoire, and doing cuts from his latest gold album, "Mark Bautista: Dream On (Expanded Version)."

His first single from the 12-track album was "I Need You." He's followed up with "You Win the Game," which he's been extensively pro-

moting. Mark is also unveiling a sexier performing persona at his Aliw Theater show. Call 911-5555.

'Trollz' premieres on Nickelodeon

On March 5, the Nickelodeon Channel invites viewers to enter the enchanting world of "Trollz," where only Troll girls have magical powers—and the boys are totally bummed about it!

"Trollz" focuses on five girlfriends who live in the whimsical city of Trollzopolis in the 21st century. The girls have the same fun and problems that human kids have—and the existence of Troll magic gives them another world to deal with, including sinister creatures and spirits. Can the girls handle the responsibility of defending Trollzopolis against them? Catch "Trollz," premiering at 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. tomorrow on the Nickelodeon channel.

'Red Carpet Manila 2006'

The 78th Academy Awards airs live on March 6 at 9 a.m. and primetime at 7 p.m. on the Prime Shift on RPN-9 (Channel 14 on Sky Gold and Silver, and Destiny Cable).

Prime Sh. also reunites with Mandarin Oriental Manila to stage "Red Carpet Manila 2006" on March 6 at 7 p.m.

The Mandarin's Captain's Bar will be the posh venue for a wide-screen uninterrupted viewing of the Oscars, and the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra will also serenade film buffs with songs from the movies as they dine with Manila's finest. Plus luxurious gift bags from Rustan's, Summit Media and the Mandarin Oriental for the evening's celebrity guests!

Manila Dragons Cup

The Manila Dragons Dragonboat Rowing Team will host the first Manila Dragons Cup tomorrow in Manila Bay. The race is the only dragonboat marathon sanctioned by the Philippine Dragon Boat Federation (PDBF). The team commemorates its 15th anniversary this year.

Call Jong Valente at 0917 817-2071 or Greg Doronila at 0922 810-9457.

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Chips off the old blocks

By Behn Cervantes



Conventional

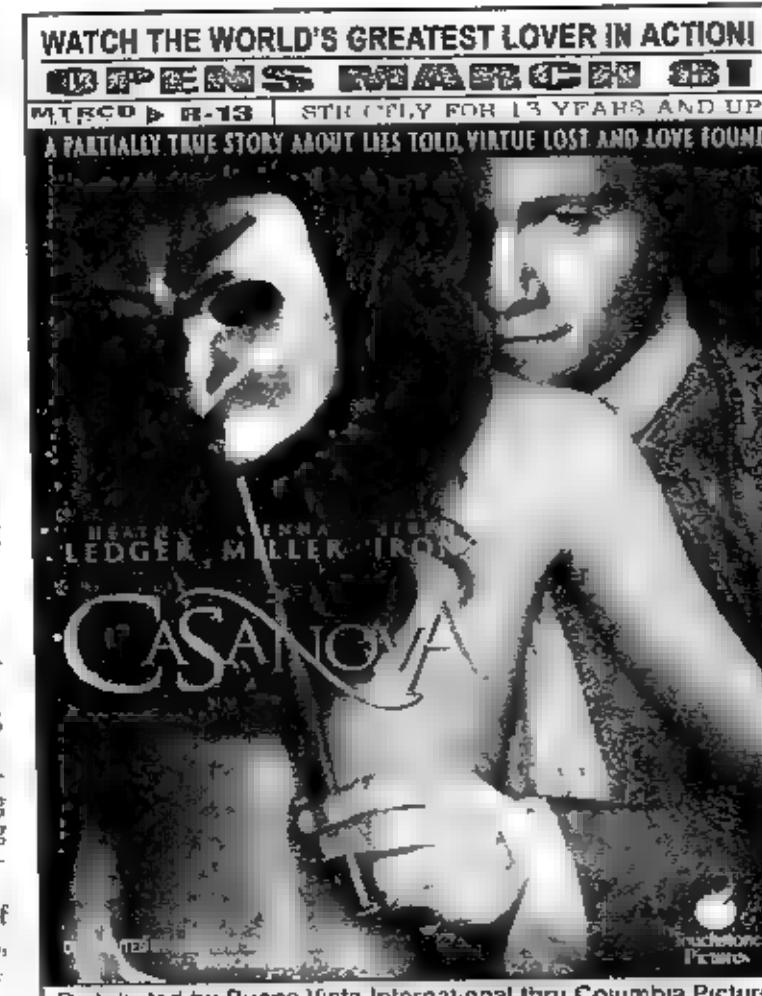
Wayne's son, Patrick, was a fine-looking young fellow. In fact, he was better-looking than his dad, but he was handsome in a rather conventional manner. John, on the other hand, had uniquely handsome, rugged features.

Patrick never took advantage of his father's influence. However, he did appear in his father's films, like "The Green Beret," but none of those minor roles were good enough for viewers to remember him.

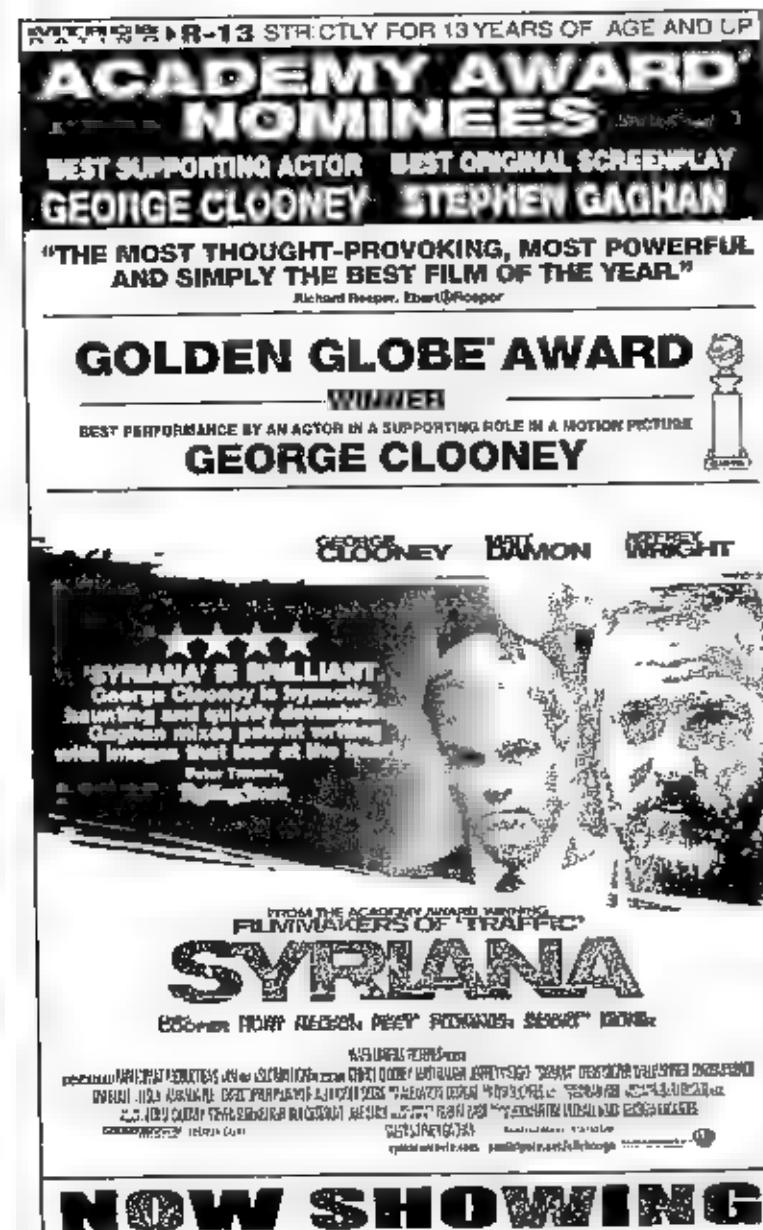
Tyrone Power was one of Hollywood's handsomest matinee idols in the '40s and '50s. So, when he married the sultry Linda Christian, it was no surprise that their daughter, Romana, would be a beautiful bundle of joy.

Disappearance
A few years ago, it was reported that Roma ran around with a shady group in Miami Beach, according to *Sadie*.

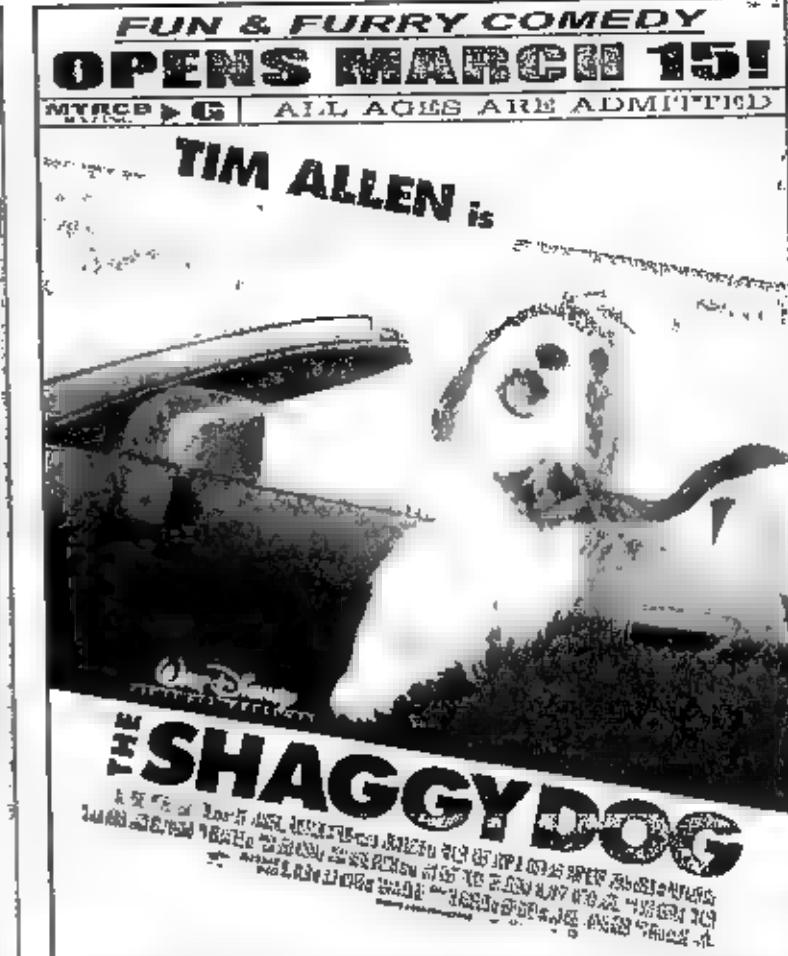
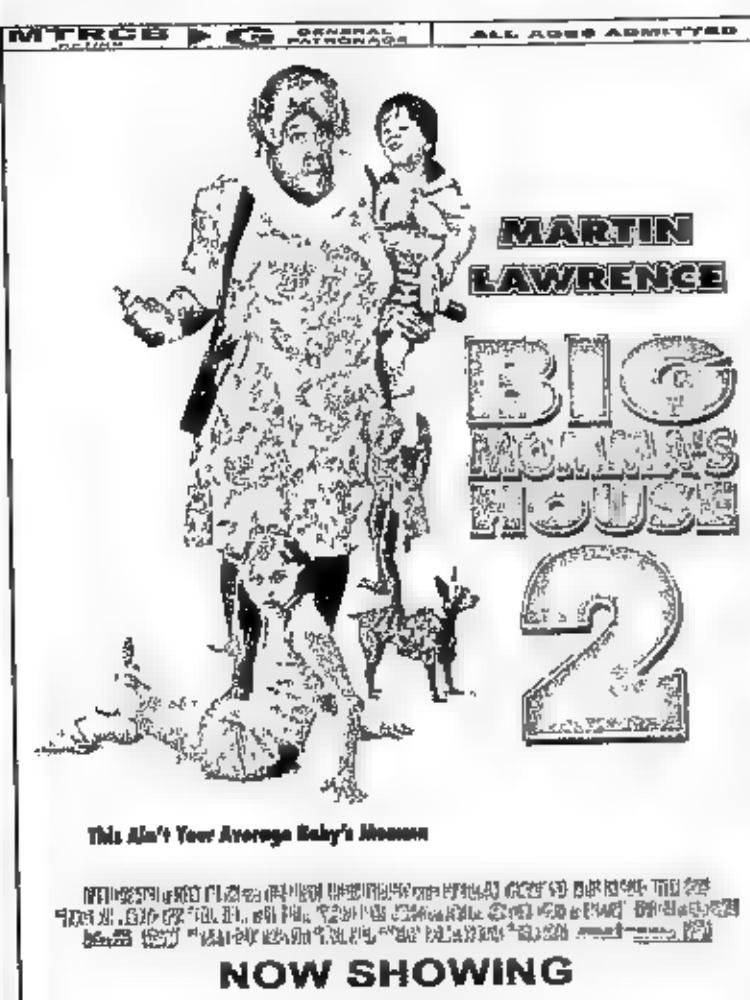
Disappearance
A few years ago, it was reported that Roma-
na ran around with a shady group in Miami.
Later, she mysteriously disappeared. Sadly,
her disappearance has remained unsolved.



Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures



REVOLUTION BEGINS MARCH 15



Grit, spectacle in 'Bullet in A Bible'

By Noelani Torre

GREEN DAY'S CD/DVD COMBO, "BULLET IN A Bible," isn't just an audio-visual record of the band's biggest gig thus far, but also what may conceivably be called the biggest concert ever in punk rock history.

A documentation of the group's two-day June 2005 performance for an audience totaling 130,000 at the National Bowl in Milton Keynes, Eng. and, "Bullet" will show you why this Bay Area trio is now considered one of the brightest stars on the rock firmament.

Debut

When they hit the scene with their successful major-label debut, "Dookie," back in 1994, people were interested, but also a bit dismissive. Certainly, nobody predicted that lead singer/guitarist Billie Joe Armstrong, bassist Mike Dirnt, and drummer Tre Cool would become punk's most popular poster boys.

Ten years after "Dookie," Green Day came up with the Grammy-winning "American Idiot," and cemented its superstar status.

Strongly political, the album not only refocused the spotlight on Green Day, it also showed people that the still bratty thirtysomething threesome was one of today's most relevant bands.

The critical dissent and mistrust of authority imbedded in "American Idiot" struck a strong chord with the dissatisfied post-9/11 youth, and you can see just how intense the reaction has been when you have a look/listen to "Bullet in A Bible."

Anthemic

With a background of 65,000 screaming voices, the set kicks off with the anthemic "American Idiot." There's more than a touch of incendiary anti-American and anti-war sentiment here, and a highly energetic Armstrong tells an equally pepped-up crowd "to sing so loud that every redneck in America hears you tonight, all right?"

It all seems highly jejune, but it's actually very effective. These guys are consummate showmen—they consciously styled the show to be a spectacle. Skill alone won't cut it, however, and Green Day infuse their performance with a grit and dynamism that contribute largely to the overall success of their performance.

Illusions

LOTUS POND



R. Valencia
and S.
Bismarck

WE EXPERIENCE difficulties in our relationships in this world because we harbor illusions about our situation.

Here are illusions that we need to be aware of and eventually give up:

1. "This person that I desire is mine and will always be mine." The reality is: We do not belong to anybody but the Supreme Owner.

Possession

A person is not anyone's possession. Everyone is eternally part and parcel of the Supreme Owner. No contract or agreement can claim ownership of a living being.

With the knowledge that we all belong to God, we must respect living beings and never attempt to force them to serve us.

2. "I will always take care of you." No one is in full control of his destiny. We can't always be around when an accident happens, when people are suddenly taken ill, or when our loved ones are distressed or lonely.

3. "I need real love and attention. Please satisfy me." We desire deep and unconditional love. No one can satisfy the soul's unsatiable craving for love and attention except the Supreme Beloved.

We are empty cups seeking to be filled by other empty cups. We give our hearts to next-door crushes, movie idols, imaginary dream partners. We beg love from other beggars!

Unconditional

Seek love from the overflowing source of unconditional and eternal love: the Supreme Being. Only He can satisfy our need to be fully loved. From this foremost relationship, our love naturally expands to all of God's children.

Without illusions, there will be no frustrations.

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showmen.

ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY 22

CD/DVD REVIEW: GREEN DAY'S 'BULLET IN A BIBLE'

3: Final Destination 3 1: Close To You
4: Brokeback Mountain 2: Nasasai si Francis?
5: Fearless 4: The Mail

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MTRCB ► R-13 ► PARENTAL ADVISORY

OPENS MARCH 8

IN AMERICA THERE'S 'THE AMITYVILLE HORROR'
IN THE U.K. THERE IS 'THE DARK'

A GRIEF-STRICKEN FAMILY,
A TRAGEDY-HAUNTED HOUSE ON THE
CLIFFS OF WALES AND A SMALL TOWN'S
SECRET HISTORY

In an attempt to pull her family together, New Yorker Adele Tullian travels with her daughter Sarah to Anglesey, Wales in the U.K. to visit her contractor father, James Tullian.

The morning after they arrive, Sarah mysteriously vanishes. While the parents desperately search for Sarah, a guilt-ridden Adele is haunted by visions of her daughter as though she is trapped somewhere inside the haunted house. Adele soon learns of an ancient local legend of a place called The Dark—an ethereal land of the dead—and she becomes convinced that Sarah is communicating to her from The Dark.

Not long after Sarah disappears, Adele and James find themselves involved with a girl who not only bears a striking resemblance to their missing daughter—but reveals that she has returned from the dead to inform them on how to get Sarah back. They must follow the rule: one of the living, for one of the dead. The living must be sacrificed so that the dead can return. Townsfolk suspect that the Tullians are succumbing to the legacy of madness and murder that overwhelmed the house's previous tenants.

BASED ON A
TRUE INCIDENT
THAT TAPS INTO
WELSH
MYTHOLOGY

THE
DARK
SEAN BEAN MARIA BELLO

BRUCE WILLIS MOS DEF DAVID MORSE

For a New York cop
and his witness,
the distance between
life and death just
got very short.

1 WITNESS...
118 MINUTES...

118
BLOCKS

LAST RELEASED: 2005
RUNNING TIME: 118 mins.
STORY: Bruce Willis plays a New York police officer who witnesses a killing. He teams up with Mos Def to track down the killer. David Morse plays the killer.

IN
THEATERS
MARCH 8

SATURDAY Special

Second-guessing the Oscars

FROM ANNA DARJO: "Who are your bets for this year's Academy Awards derby?"

After sitting through marathon movie screenings and going over the top choices of leading critics' groups and award-giving bodies, here's our fearless Oscar forecast:

Tragic romance trumps political themes in the best picture race, as Ang Lee's "Brokeback Mountain"—the film to beat at the 78th Academy Awards—gallops its way past Bennett Miller's "Capote," Paul Haggis' "Crash," George Clooney's "Good Night, and Good Luck" and Steven Spielberg's "Munich."

The big-screen adaptation of Annie Proulx's heartbreak love story has, so far, won best picture nods at the Golden Globes, the Bafta, the Producers Guild, and in most critics' groups



HOFFMAN AND WITHERSPOON. Likely winners in the best actor and best actress categories, respectively.

ing derby are David Cronenberg ("A History of Violence") and Fernando Meirelles ("The Constant Gardner")—and they're not even nominated!

In the best actress category, it looks like a lock for Reese Witherspoon ("Walk the Line").

SECOND-GUESSING/A3-3

SHOW BIZ Q & A

Rito P. Asilo

(NYFC, LAFCA, Broadcast Film Critics, etc.)—except at the National Society of Film Critics (its choice: "Capote") and the National Board of Review ("Good Night, and Good Luck").

Mainstream

The groundbreaking "Brokeback Mountain" deserves accolades for its successful attempt to explore a touchy if timely subject matter and to bring its unconventional story to mainstream audiences. It deserves to win—and it will!

Lee, "Brokeback's" genre-busting director, has won the Directors Guild's nod twice, but has yet to bring home the Oscar.

His closest competitors in the direct-

this week

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NASAAN SI FRANCIS BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2

RELASYON PORTRAIT ARTIST

CINEMAS

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MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA 12:00 / 2:30 / 4:30 / 6:30 / 8:30

THE FEARLESS 12:15 / 2:20 / 4:15 / 5:30 / 7:15

NASAAN SI FRANCIS 12:30 / 2:30 / 4:30 / 6:30 / 8:30

EVENTS & PROMOS

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**SUN
CELLULAR**

Everything important is Under the Sun

'Pride and Prejudice' strikes all the right sparks

By Noelani Torre

JANE AUSTEN'S first and most beloved work, "Pride and Prejudice," has been made into a film no less than 10 times. Thus, the question: What does Joe Wright's new version of this classic tale of love and 18th-century manners have that earlier versions don't?

Fresh and vibrant

Of course you'd be hard put to answer that if you haven't seen all the other "P&P" movies, but if

you've read the book itself, you'll agree that this particular cinematic reworking is fresh and vibrant.

Based on Austen's 1797 novel, this latest movie adaptation is, in fact, more red-blooded than the text. It is earthier, and at the same time, more romantic, no doubt so as to be more aligned to the taste of the younger generation.

Indeed, there is so much unrestrained emotion in the film that you'll wonder if you're actually in Brontë country and not Austenland.

The emotion is not confined to the characters themselves; it permeates the film's very air. The gorgeous landscape is apt to turn brooding, the characters get romantically drenched, and we even see the supposedly re-

strained and straitlaced Mr. Darcy galloping through a forest.

Then again, for an audience used to seeing melodrama and the graphic depiction of sexual gymnastics, all that probably sounds terribly undemonstrative.

Satirical eye

However, for Austen fans who appreciate her incisive and deceptively gentle satirical eye, this segue into a romanticism bordering on the gothic may come as a surprise. Whether or not it will be pleasant is a matter of taste.

The movie stars Keira Knightley as the bold and intelligent heroine, Elizabeth Bennet, and Matthew MacFadyen as the proud and mysterious Mr. Darcy. Both actors give

us excellent portrayals.

Knightley positively glows on screen, so much so that you are apt to forget that Elizabeth is supposed to conquer with her intelligence and not with her beauty. Still, it is hardly the actress' fault that she is physically blessed.

Aloof

MacFadyen injects his aloof Mr. Darcy with glimpses of passion and—judging by the shrieks from the female audience members in the cinema—does this very effectively. He and Knightley strike all the right sparks with each other, though the script doesn't allow us to see and hear him as often as we

should. This latest adaptation is, certainly, a delight to watch.



MACFADYEN AND KNIGHTLEY. Play Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet, respectively, in latest adaptation of Jane Austen's novel.

Film industry needs more government support

By Nestor U. Torre

THE GOVERNMENT PROFESSES to support the Filipino movie industry, but its actions—or, more properly, lack of them—behave its utterances.

A lot has been said and written about this disheartening situation, but the bottom line is, the industry gets little real support because our leaders don't see the true value and power of the film medium.

Priorities

That's why, in the government's order of priorities, movies are among the country's least essential products. Thus, films are regarded in these parts as a luxury industry, which is slapped with the highest taxes.

These onerous taxes, in turn,

make producing movies here expensive, so producers don't take risks and play it safe with the same, old plot formats and star combinations. Thus, in turn, bores viewers to tears, and prompts them to stop watching local movies and patronize US films, instead.

Attitude

So, a lot is riding on the government's attitude regarding our movies. Our leaders should first make it a point to watch Filipino films—both the good and the bad. That way, they'll have a better idea of how to help the industry deal with the grave problems of survival it's currently facing.

Second, our leaders have to convince themselves that social scientists are right: Movies aren't a luxury industry; they're essential and im-

portant because they subliminally affect how viewers think and act.

Third, the government should review current laws related to film, retain the truly helpful and throw out those that affect the industry negatively. That means drastically reducing the onerous taxes that have kept local movies from coming into their own for so many decades now.

Values

Fourth, subsidize or otherwise support the production of quality films, which enhance viewers' values.

Fifth, subsidize the efforts of some local producers to penetrate the world market, and thus make moviemaking a dollar-earning industry.

Sixth, set up a film archive to

preserve and restore the best Filipino films, because they constitute part of the country's cultural patrimony.

Appreciation

Seventh, train teachers to teach film appreciation in our schools, to raise the standards of local viewers, who would then be more demanding and discriminating, and thus pressure our filmmakers to do better work.

All of these new steps will help Filipino films finally get out of their decade-long slump—and, with them, the country's many viewers, who are sorely in need of better and more inspiring films.

But, first things first, our government leaders have to truly see the light in this regard, so that all these beautiful things can happen!

Four actors, 60 roles

From page A3-A

relationships. It is an intoxicating blend of singing, comedy and, of course, romance."

DiPietro is thrilled about the

positive reception. "What I'm most happy about is the way audiences have embraced the show," he says.

"I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change" will have matinee performances at 3:30 p.m. tomorrow and on March 12, and

evening performances on March 10 and 11 at 8 p.m. Call 887-0710, or Ticketworld at 891-9999.

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| G1 | 1 NASAAN SI FRANCIS | 2 FEARLESS | 3 FINAL DESTINATION 3 |
| G4 | 1 FINAL DESTINATION 3 | 2 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA | 3 PRIDE & PREJUDICE 12:10, 2:45, 5:20, 7:55, 10:30 GUARANTEED SEATS |
| GB1 | 4 CAPOTE | 5 SYRIANA | 6 FEARLESS |
| GB3 | 7 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2 | | |
| ATC | 1 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA | 2 FEARLESS | |
| ACC | 3 PRIDE & PREJUDICE 3:10, 5:45, 8:30, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS | 4 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN 1:00, 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 11:00 GUARANTEED SEATS | 5 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA 2:30, 5:30, 8:30, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS |
| M2 | 6 WALK THE LINE | 7 PRIME | 8 CLOSE TO YOU |
| | 9 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2 | 10 NABAAN SI FRANCIS | 11 CLOSE TO YOU |

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ABC

Second-guessing

From page A3-1

who—aside from Amy Adams' memorable turn in "Junebug"—delivers one of Hollywood's most refreshing, screen-chomping performances in the past cinematic year.

Of the 18 award-giving bodies we polled, 10 chose to go with Reese—including the coveted SAG and the Golden Globes (comedy-musical).

Felicity Huffman ("Transamerica") won at the National Board of Review and the Golden Globes (drama). Keira Knightley ("Pride and Prejudice"), Charlize Theron ("North Country") and Judi Dench ("Mrs. Henderson Presents") round out the Oscar best actress nominees' list.

Coveted

Our choice: Reese Witherspoon, and she will hoist that coveted trophy on Oscar night.

After years of outstanding but underappreciated performances, Philip Seymour Hoffman ("Capote"), is set to get his due. His performance as the revered American writer is a high-wire act that is as entertaining as it is devastating.

It is, however, Heath Ledger ("Brokeback Mountain") who delivers the year's most indelible performance in the best actor category—one that will be remembered long after the dust settles on Hoffman's Oscar trophy.

The best supporting actor prize is a toss between triple-nominee George Clooney ("Syriana"), who's very popular with his peers, and Paul Giamatti ("Cinderella Man"), whose Oscar-worthy performance in 2004's "Sideways" was snubbed by the Academy.

Brave

But, the brave actor who deserves the golden statuette is Jake Gyllenhaal ("Brokeback Mountain").

Other supporting actor nominees Matt Dillon ("Crash") and William Hurt, who appeared in "A History of Violence" for only 10 minutes! (Judi Dench did clinch her best supporting actress trophy for eight short minutes of screen time in 1998's "Shakespeare in Love.")

Rache Weisz ("The Constant Gardener") is expected to bring home the supporting actress trophy, but the actress who deserves the award is Amy Adams for her performance in the little-seen indie, "Junebug."

Tricia...

From page A3-4

Of course, our fond hope is that Tricia will also return to the musical-theater stage, in a suitable production that won't contradict her spiritual convictions.

The last time we saw Tricia, she was with Gigi Posadas, another exceptional and versatile total performer who has opted to lie low of late, and we urged both of them to help energize the musical-theater scene, where they were discovered. Let's hope that happens before the year is over!


movietime
centerstage

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Actual props and costumes used in the movie are now on display at SM City Manila Cinema lobby. From February 22 to March 14.

movietime.

A PARTIALLY TRUE STORY ABOUT LIES TOLD,
VIRTUES LOST AND LOVE FOUND

The Podium Cinemas 1 and 2

THE PODIUM CINEMA

FEARLESS

11:30 AM / 11:50 AM / 02:10 / 04:25
06:45 / 08:30 LFS / 10:30 END

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

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MEMOIRS OF GEISHA

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06:45 / 08:30 LFS / 10:30 END

FINAL DESTINATION 3

12:30 PM / 01:45 PM / 02:50

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FROM THE PRODUCER OF "HERO"

STRENGTH
HONOR
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Tricia Sings PEARLESS

A RONNY YULE



Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

A3-4

SATURDAY,
MARCH 4, 2006



JIMENEZ. Exceptional versatility.

Tricia returns with two albums

By Nestor U. Torre

TRICIA AMPER JIMENEZ HAS COME OUT with two new albums—"Through the Years," a compilation of "soulful" music in collaboration with other Christian artists like Gary Venciano and Lito Villareal, and "Tricia Ampere Sings Andre Dionisio Songs," interpreting songs like "Ulan," "Kandila" and "Kung Ako Maniniwa."

Listening to the albums recently, I found myself flashing back to the '80s, when Tricia Ampere auditioned for our hit musical, "Magimila Ka," at the CCP.

Combination

Tricia who? Well, even at the tender age of 14 then, she was a bubbly charmer who bowled us over with her combination of great looks, effervescent personality, disciplined work ethic, spectacular singing ability and exceptional versatility.

If memory serves, I first cast Tricia in an adolescent ingenue role in the musical. Very quickly, though, she showed that she was meant for bigger roles, so she ended up playing the female lead role of Monina!

Tricia was patently too young to play the lead character, who was a college graduate, but her thespic talent enabled her to come off believably in the part.

Much like Hilda Korone, who was also only 14 when she played young-adult leading ladies in some of Lino Brocko's romantic dramas, Tricia was able to create the illusion of being years older than she really was.

She was versatile enough to play a great range of other roles in the musical—including a wacky housemaid!

Enthusiasm

Audiences were thoroughly taken with this new musical-theater star, and big things were clearly in store for her. Other directors and producers shared our enthusiasm for Tricia—they agreed with us that she came across like a young Maricel Soriano. Clearly, there would be many more roles and productions, not just in theater, for this gem of a discovery.

However, God had other plans for our promising young talent. While she was still in her teens, Tricia opted for domestic bliss and married Butch Jimenez. For years, she focused on their growing family, and on Christian activities.

Of late, however, Tricia has become more active again as a performer. Aside from cutting albums, she sings at Christian events and co-hosts "The 700 Club" on TV from time to time.

This is as it should be, because Tricia's God-given talent shouldn't be kept under wraps, but should be shared with a listening and viewing public in great need of inspirational and values-laden entertainment.

TRICIA A3-3

Four actors, 60 roles

By Edmund L. Sicam



CURRENTLY ENTERTAINING audiences at the Rep Globe Theater in Makati is Repertory's "I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change."

The musical revue BATUCAN Topbills directed by Michael Williams stars Cathy Azanza, Liesl Batucan, Robbie Guevara and Nic Manahan—who portray more than 60 roles in a collection of sketches and musical numbers about the joys of dating, romance, marriage, husbands, wives and in-laws.

Sketches

The production started out as a series of sketches without music called "Love Lemmings," Joe DiPietro's first theatrical work. A producer soon asked DiPietro to turn it into a musical revue.

The show premiered as an off-Broadway production in 1996 and was such a hit that it has since surpassed the Broadway runs of "My Fair Lady," "Annie," "South Pacific," "Grease," "Fiddler on the Roof" and "Hello, Dolly."

Lovestruck males have used the production to propose to their partners. Forty-nine times, a young man has taken the stage to make a surprise proposal to his sweetheart. In all cases, the brides-to-be happily accepted as the audience roared its approval.

Praises

Theater critics have heaped praises on this production: "This delightful entertainment, charmingly fresh, hopelessly romantic hit is a musical joyride through the jungle of modern

FOUR A3-2



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BUSINESS

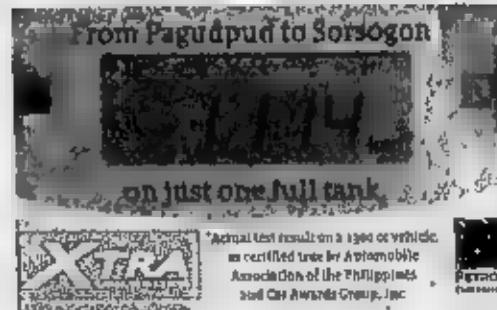
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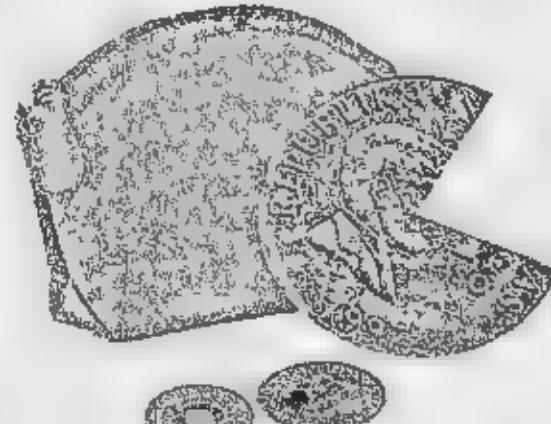
BIR exceeds January collection goal

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

How much is your peso?

THE VALUE OF P1 in 2005 was only P0.77 when compared to its value in 2000.

Source: Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Chone B. Galang, PDI Research

But 2-month performance still short by P3.15B

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE COLLECTED MORE THAN what it was tasked to generate in February, aided in part by the increase in the expanded value-added tax.

BIR documents showed that the agency collected P39.23 billion in February, the first month of implementation of the higher VAT. This was slightly higher than its collection goal of P39.18 billion for the month.

The February collection figure was also 24-percent higher than the P31.67 billion it generated in the same month last year.

The VAT was raised to 12 percent from 10 percent effective Feb. 1 in compliance with the VAT Reform Law, considered the most important revenue measure aimed at trimming the Arroyo administration's gaping budget deficit.

The BIR said in a statement that its positive performance in February was also attributed

to administrative measures implemented to shore up tax collection. These included the use of third-party sources and industry benchmarks on income to check the accuracy of tax payments, and the enhancement of its computer systems to better detect tax evasion.

The BIR also said a personnel reshuffle, which elicited criticism from some disgruntled employees, helped lift its tax collection performance.

"The recent reshuffling of top officials from the national office down to the regional and district levels has brought positive effects to the collection efforts of the bureau," the BIR said.

BIR/B5

WHAT'S INSIDE

Micro-business forum for military spouses set

By Ronnel W. Domingo

Farmers' group hits plan to import sugar /B3

ADB clears turnover of Napocor debt /B8

Philippine Business Fair that kicked off yesterday at the Megatrade Hall of SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City.

The fair coincides with the Philippine Entrepreneurs Summit 2006, which Image Plus Business Solutions organized with the help of BusinessWorks Inc.

The PCE spearheaded last week's "Go Negosyo" summit and trade show for small and start-up businesses, which was part of a comprehensive advocacy campaign aimed at spurring economic growth by enticing people to put up their own businesses.

Some 50,000 people attended the forum where President Mac-

pagal-Arroyo was the guest of honor or a day before she issued Presidential Proclamation No. 1017.

"But the real measure of the summit's success is whether people would take the initiative to muster the discipline and resources to go into business and whether their ventures would succeed," Concepcion said.

Asked whether PP 1017 had countered the PCE's efforts to encourage more business activities, Concepcion said the strengthening of the peso against the dollar showed how confident the businesses were.

"We need to build up confidence and encourage optimism because

people are fed up with rallies (and political turmoil)," he said. "We need an entrepreneurial revolution to push the economy forward."

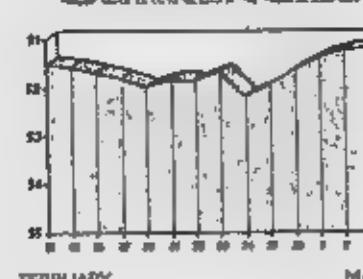
Concepcion said the planned micro-business forum was aimed at helping families of soldiers and police officers tap additional sources of livelihood although it would be open to everybody who would want to participate.

"After that, PCE will hold an agri-business conference in Central Luzon sometime in October," he added.

During the launching of Go Negosyo last month, Concepcion said PCE intended to take up its

MICRO-BUSINESS/B5

INDICATORS CURRENCIES



FEBRUARY MARCH

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 51.18 = \$1

As of 5 p.m., March 3, 2006

Y 116.26 = \$1

As of 5 p.m., March 3, 2006

GOLD: \$569.30-569.80

per ounce Hong Kong, March 3, 2006

STOCK MARKET Shares close lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.34-percent lower yesterday as profit-taking set in after a four-day rally, dealers said.

They said the market was due for a correction after four days of gains, as investors had taken account of President Macapagal-Arroyo's planned lifting of a state of emergency imposed last week to thwart an alleged coup.

Ms Arroyo formally ended the emergency on Friday shortly before the market's close.

The composite index slipped 7.24 points to 2,130.37 after moving between 2,125.16 and 2,145.96. The all-shares Index rose 7.30 points to 1,034.52.

Volume amounted to 1.01 billion shares worth P374.75 million. Gainers beat losers 45 to 39, with 43 stocks unchanged.

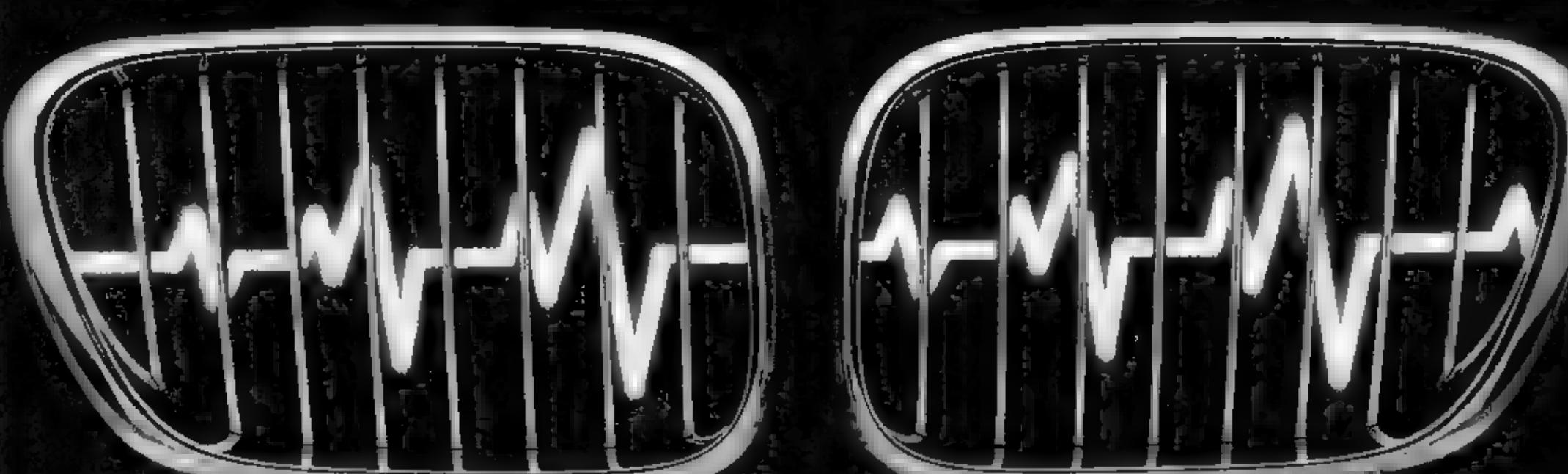
The lifting of the state of emergency should further boost investor confidence as it suggests that the security situation is now stable.

"The market is also convinced that the eco-

SHARES/B5



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Announcing a series of BMW dealer activities highlighted by an exciting BMW Central Event.



BMW Xpo Month Activities

March 1 to 31, 2006

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March 17 to 19, 2006

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- New model introductions
- Chance to win a brand new BMW X3 for every test drive
- Surprise gifts for BMW Xpo Central Event visitors

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IF YOU CANNOT EXPECT OUR BELOVED SEC to put a brake on the foolishness in Uniwide, maybe it's time for a congressional investigation.

The bargain retail chain Uniwide Sales went bankrupt after its owners borrowed heavily to speculate on real estate.

The company is now under the receivership of the SEC, the Securities and Exchange Commission, which appointed the "managers" in the company.

The SEC took control of its operation, primarily to prevent the creditors (i.e. the banks) from pouncing on it and taking away everything.

The idea is for the SEC to relieve the company from its debt burden. Under the SEC receivership, hopefully, Uniwide can recover to repay all the creditors.

Uniwide owes the banks about P3 billion. It also has hundreds of unsecured creditors (i.e. suppliers), owing them some P1.5 billion.

How in the world can this company pay for its debts? The company is about to lease out its seven stores for what could be a "sweetheart deal" price of P4 million a month.

If only the SEC did some elementary mathematics, at such an income, the store rental can pay for Uniwide's debts in about 94 years.

Methinks something is wrong here. Or even criminal!

WITH the landslide disaster in Leyte came a renewed call for a total logging ban, particularly from some dubious NGOs that solicit "contributions" abroad.

Alright then, where do we get our wood?

The last time I checked, this country uses at least 3 million cubic meters of timber a year. We use it for almost everything—furniture and woodcraft exports, house construction, and even toilet paper.

Here are the sad statistics—we import a million cubic meters a year, we produce locally a million cubic meters—legally, that is, with DENR permits and all—and we allow illegal logging to take care of the remaining one million cubic meters.

That alone means that the government foregoes P800 million a year in revenues from forest charges and all, not to mention the income tax that illegal loggers do not bother paying for.

And do you know what the market price is of those one million cubic meters from illegal logging? It's P3 billion every year. That's why the illegal loggers are highly organized—and heavily armed. They are ready to kill. It's big money.

Now sometime last year, everybody gathered for a bigtime conference on forest management. The ADB even hosted it.

The biggest worry was, how are we going to get lumber supply 20 years from now if we do not manage our forests well. Nobody is doing anything.

Two Filipino patients got treatment for aneurysm—for FREE. It would have cost P100,000 each. And Makati Med is not even talking about it. Much less advertising it!

GIVE ME A BRAKE

BREAKTIME



Conrado R. Banal III

vesting in forest management, because things are so unstable in the wood sector.

Look, at the drop of some fake eyelashes, the Palace can just suspend logging for political survival. Right, Mike?

Thankfully, the conference yielded a bright idea. And that was, the creation of a "forest management board." It should look at the total package—management, investments, and policies. Everybody loved it, including representatives from the academe, both the civil and the uncivilized society, and even the business sector.

Then DENR chief Michael Defensor promised to work out an "executive order" to create the board.

Defensor has come and gone at the DENR and, several months later, still there is no EO. Do you think he was just pulling our legs or something?

HERE'S one for the medical tourism books.

A world's first medical procedure was just performed here in the Philippines, at the Computerized Imaging Institute of the Makati Medical Center.

Doctors nicknamed the procedure as "pipeline" embolization, meaning that they put a high-tech "tube" along a blood vessel in your brain to stop the bleeding from a sickness called "aneurysm."

Remember that—the disease that took the life of PPJ?

From what I gathered, some eight years ago, the same institute performed the first "non-surgery" treatment for aneurysm in this country, the one called "coiling."

Of course it helped that the head of the institute is Benjamin Adapon, a doctor who spent years of training in the US as a neurosurgeon, and then came back here as a "beak-scientist."

The good doctor is said to be friends with Peter Nelson, a bigtime neurosurgeon at the New York University Medical Center, who performed the "pipeline" procedure here last January.

I mean, no wonder Nelson chose the Makati Med for the initial clinical trial.

Anyway, the "pipeline" is a device developed by a US company called Chestnut Medical, an invention of a bioengineer by the name of Quang Tran. Yes, he's Asian!

Two Filipino patients got treatment for aneurysm—for FREE. It would have cost P100,000 each. And Makati Med is not even talking about it. Much less advertising it!

SMC reports P9.1-B profit for 2005

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

SAN MIGUEL CORP. POSTED A SLIGHT 3-percent increase in profit in 2005 to P9.15 billion from a restated net income of P8.86 billion in 2004, as the food and beverage giant continued to reel from high financing charges due to its aggressive expansion overseas.

Financing charges and one-time expenses due to its acquisition of Australian dairy National Foods, its largest acquisition last year, hit P6.9 billion in 2005 compared with P2.1 billion in 2004.

Excluding these one-offs, net income would have increased by 10 percent, San Miguel said in a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) yesterday.

San Miguel's full year net income, however, surpassed projections of stock market analysts who expected it to post a decline in net income to between P7.3 to P7.8 billion, an Inquirer poll earlier showed.

Contributions from its newly acquired international businesses also kicked in last year as San Miguel reported a 30-percent increase in its consolidated revenues to P227 billion.

This was largely boosted by the consolidation of National Foods, which SMC acquired last year for roughly \$1 billion.

Operating income remained unchanged at P17.5 billion despite raw material cost increases and one-time packaging costs incurred for Gran Matador and Coke "Sakto."

The operating income also reflected a restructuring charge at beverage unit Coca Cola and hard liquor arm Ginebra San Miguel totaling P972 million.

These costs weighed down on the profitability of San Miguel's soft drink and hard liquor operations, San Miguel chief finance officer Ferdinand Constantino wrote in a report to investors yesterday.

Constantino also explained that excise taxes also dragged volumes of San Miguel's hard liquor unit Ginebra San Miguel, adversely affecting affordability.

"Looking beyond these results, I think it is important to stress that we were prepared to forego on short-term profitability because we believe we've made the right choices in terms of strengthening our position to deliver longer-term growth across our core businesses and set the agenda in our industry—both in the Philippines and in the region," Constantino told investors.

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Farmers' group hits plan to import sugar

Zesto maker asked to support local industry

By Ronnel W. Domingo

A GROUP OF SUGARCANE FARMERS HAS opposed plans of a cola and fruit juice drink manufacturer to import sugar despite the spike in sugar prices in the world market.

In a letter to Trade Secretary Peter B. Ravela dated March 1, the National Federation of Sugarcane Planters Inc. said Asiawide Refreshment Corp.'s plan to import sugar was puzzling considering imports were more expensive.

Asiawide Refreshment, maker of RC Cola and the Zesto line of drinks, had proposed to import some 100,000 metric tons of sugar, which Ravela has said "could be beneficial to consumers."

Company officials had said domestic prices have increased to more than P40 a kilo from only P31 in November.

The officials felt importation could help bring down local prices considering, like when the government announced it was importing 50,000 MT to correct the prices.

Asiawide Refreshment said the announcement apparently served its purpose.

The price of refined sugar went down to P1,650 a 50-kilogram bag from P1,820 in early February, while that of brown sugar went

down to P1,300 a bag from P1,420.

NFSP president Enrique D. Rojas said it was "frustrating" that Asiawide Refreshment did not sympathize with local sugarcane farmers.

"For a long time, the price of domestic sugar failed to catch up with inflation despite the spiraling cost of production," Rojas said.

"The exorbitant cost of fertilizer, fuel, spare parts and even labor made us lose money in the past years," he added. "It is only now that sugar prices have increased at a level that allows us (us) to pay the debts that we incurred."

He said imports were still more expensive since the landed price of importing sugar, if it came from Southeast Asia, was about P1,655 a bag plus a refining cost of P450, as well as duties and value added tax.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

P21M for Semirara cleanup

THE NATIONAL Power Corp. has already used up P21 million of its P90-million budget for cleaning up parts of Semirara Island affected by an oil spill. The rocky and sandy beach, as well as 40 hectares of mangroves on the island, have already been cleared of oil and debris. On Dec. 18, a Napocor power barge ran aground on the island and ruptured its fuel tanks, spilling around 210,000 liters of oil and contaminating over 600 meters of the Semirara shoreline and more than 100 hectares of mangroves. "We are doing everything that we can to expedite the cleanup," Napocor said. "This is the first phase of our total package in mitigating the effects of the oil spill. The second phase, which we want to implement immediately, is to rehabilitate the mangrove areas and provide livelihood assistance for the residents of affected communities." Abigail L. Ho

ERC drafts new guidelines

THE ENERGY Regulatory Commission has drafted a set of guidelines that will not only encourage competition in the power sector, but also shield against anti-competitive and discriminatory behavior. According to the regulatory body, its Competition Rules and Complaint Procedures is up for final comments by industry stakeholders. The ERC said that the set of rules would also "ensure and promote competition, encourage market development and customer choice, discourage and penalize anti-competitive or discriminatory behavior." The rules likewise aim to prevent abuse of market power to protect public interest. Earlier, the ERC issued guidelines governing the limits on the control and ownership of generating capacity within grids and nationwide. Abigail L. Ho

Israel firm buys into IT park

ISRAEL-BASED conglomerate Africa Israel Investments Ltd. will acquire 465.37 million shares of Cyberzone Properties Inc. (CPI) for P538 million, effectively diluting Filinvest Development Corp.'s (FDC) ownership of the information technology park developer from 90 percent to 54 percent.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, FDC said the infusion from Africa Israel would enable CPI to hasten the construction of more IT-based buildings to meet the rising demand.

The growing ability of CPI to meet such demands helps establish a niche for FDC and the Filinvest group of companies in general, in the area of IT park and (economic zone) development, and widens the range of real estate products that they could reliably offer to the general public," the company said.

Under their investment agreement, Africa Israel will pay P638 million in cash, or P1.156 a share, within a 24-month period.

CPI said it would use Africa Israel's investment to bankroll the construction of additional buildings within the Northgate Cyberzone IT park in Alabang, as well as fund its other working capital requirements.

Abigail L. Ho

Paxys buys stake in firm

Publicly-listed call center firm Paxys Inc. has acquired a 15.8-percent stake in software maker Global Ideology Corp. (GIC) for P10.4 million, and will acquire more shares of the company in the future.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, Paxys said it would inject P7.5 million in GIC by subscribing to 3.33 million new common shares.

The new money will be used to finance the software company's expansion around the region as well as fund its plan to diversify its product line.

The subscription will also increase Paxys'

stake in GIC to 23.8 percent. Subsequently, Paxys intends to acquire a majority ownership stake of 51 percent in GIC within the first half of 2006 through a follow-up transaction involving the purchase of an additional tranche of common shares and warrants, and through a subscription of new common shares," Paxys said in its disclosure.

Locally-incorporated GIC sells software applications for corporate clients based on "mobile and other emerging technologies." Daxin L. Lucas

NOTICE OF MERGER

Notice is hereby given that the Articles and Plan of Merger pertaining to the merger of ROHM ELECTRONICS PHILIPPINES, INC., (hereinafter referred to as "REPI"), as the surviving corporation, and ROHM APOLLO SEMICONDUCTORS PHILIPPINES, INC. (hereinafter referred to as "RASPI"), as the absorbed corporation, both corporations organized under the laws of the Republic of the Philippines, have been approved in separate meetings held on 15 February 2006 and which were duly called for the purpose by the majority vote of their respective Board of Directors and by the vote of the entire outstanding capital stock of both REPI and RASPI.

Notice is likewise hereby given that said Articles and Plan of Merger between REPI and RASPI will be filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission SEC. Upon the effectivity of the merger as approved by the SEC, the merged entities shall continue under the name ROHM ELECTRONICS PHILIPPINES, INC.

This announcement shall serve as notice to all parties concerned of the legal effects of the Plan of Merger between REPI and RASPI and the legal dissolution of the absorbed corporation.

HIROYUKI OTA (Sgd.)

Vice President

Rohm Electronics Philippines, Inc.

NOBUYUKI SAKAMOTO (Sgd.)

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| Optra 1.6 L M/T | 650,000 | 89,000 | 49,946 | 34,225 | 26,541 | 18,888 | 15,131 | 13,185 | 7,790 |
| Optra 1.6 L A/T | 696,000 | 89,000 | 54,042 | 37,032 | 28,717 | 20,436 | 16,372 | 14,266 | 8,341 |
| Optra 1.6 LS M/T | 724,000 | 89,000 | 56,535 | 38,740 | 30,042 | 21,379 | 17,127 | 14,924 | 8,676 |
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Effectiveness of 'good,' 'bad' carb diet doubted

DIETS THAT DISTINGUISH between "good carbs" and "bad carbs" are not an effective way of controlling blood sugar levels, a new study suggests.

Although made popular by the South Beach Diet and others, the glycemic index has never been fully embraced by most dietitians and remains a point of debate among scientists.

Now, diabetes researcher Elizabeth Mayer-Davis of the University of South Carolina says the use of the index should be ended altogether in favor of more traditional methods of losing weight and reducing the risk of diabetes: eating less and exercising more.

"The glycemic index is sufficiently flawed as an index that it is not helpful for scientists or people trying to create a healthy diet," Mayer-Davis said.

100-pt scale

The glycemic index is a 100-point scale, with white bread at 100 points, that measures how quickly carbohydrates enter the bloodstream as sugar.

According to Index supporters, people should avoid high-glycemic foods such as white bread and potatoes because they will quickly raise a person's blood-sugar level. On the other hand, low-glycemic foods such as carrots and apples are absorbed more slowly, making a person feel full longer and reducing cravings, which helps with weight loss.



Promoters of the diet also say that eating low-glycemic foods will result in less fluctuation in their blood sugar levels.

Both the Atkins and South Beach diets have raised interest in the theory.

A mistake

Beth Kunkel, a professor of food science and human nutrition at Clemson University and president of the South Carolina Dietetic Association, said that while there is debate among dietitians about its validity, it would be a mistake to reject the concept altogether.

"To just reject it out of hand and quit working on it would be a mistake," Kunkel said. "I just think we're five to 10 years away

from really understanding it from a research viewpoint."

Previous studies have shown conflicting results. One small study showed that people on a low-glycemic diet were less hungry later in the day than a group fed a high-glycemic diet. Another study, involving 39 overweight people, showed that those on a low-glycemic diet lowered their risk of heart disease. Both studies were conducted by Dr. David Ludwig of Boston's Children's Hospital.

However, American Heart Association officials have disputed the significance of those findings.

1,000 participants

The new study, published in the February issue of the British Journal of Nutrition, relied on food questionnaires from more than 1,000 people over five years and assessed their consumption of high- and low-glycemic foods. Researchers tested their blood sugar levels twice during the study period and found no significant correlation between the glycemic index of foods and the blood-sugar levels of participants.

Mayer-Davis said researchers should develop a new measure of how different carbohydrates can affect health. She said a better index would be based on the physical characteristics of foods, such as fat content and calories, because numerous factors influence a food's effect on blood-sugar levels.

AP

High school winners

High school first place winners were Paul Julian Hao (Chiang Kai Shek), Patrick Ong (St. Jude Catholic School), Joanna Tan (Jubilee Christian Academy), Victor Lorenz Ng and Emmanuel Plan (Ateneo).

Second placers were Geraldine Banqued (St. Paul's Pasig), Roland Lloyd Salina, Joseph Pizano and Juan Senga (Ateneo). Judges were professors from the college: Dr. Jose Marasigan, Dr. Flor Francisco, Dr. Reginaldo Marcelo and Dr. Emmanuel Cabral.

Third placers were Geraldine Banqued (St. Paul's Pasig), Roland Lloyd Salina, Joseph Pizano and Juan Senga (Ateneo). Judges were professors from the college: Dr. Jose Marasigan, Dr. Flor Francisco, Dr. Reginaldo Marcelo and Dr. Emmanuel Cabral.

Humans (and most other organisms, for that matter) do not generate energy internally, but draw on energy in food. This energy when viewed from a system-level or life cycle perspective is in turn derived from solar energy. Hence the very notion of bioenergy being used as a substitute for solar power is erroneous. The calories in our food are nothing but stored solar energy."

Those who want to know more about Gödel's theorem (without going through the math) can look at this suggestion from my student Miguel Parra [mparaz@gmail.com]

"Since I never took up the mathematical aspects of computer science in school, I first came across Gödel in the book 'The Universal Computer: The Road from Leibniz to Turing' by Martin Davis. It places the figures in computer science theory in narrative form, and is highly recommended for programmer types who are not math people."

Puzzle

A reader gives us this puzzle. Try it out, it's fun!

1. Key in the first three digits of your seven-digit phone number into the calculator.

(Note: Do not key in the area code, but the three digits after.)

2. Multiply by 80.

3. Add 1.

4. Multiply by 250.

5. Add the last 4 digits of your phone number.

6. Add the last 4 digits of your phone number again.

7. Subtract 250.

8. Divide by 2.

What appears on the calculator is your seven-digit phone number. Neat, huh?

Why does it work? Think of algebra. The best solution will be published in this column.

E-mail: blessbook@yahoo.com

ASK THE DENTIST

Paul R. De Castro, DMD

Yellow teeth

WHAT TOOTHPASTE WOULD you recommend for yellow teeth?—Jessica B.

acidic. Teeth should not be constantly exposed or treated with acids or abrasives because you might wear out the enamel.

If you are still concerned about your yellow teeth, visit your dentist and you can try bleaching your teeth. But I also caution against bleaching for a long time for the same reasons.

E-mail your questions at dentalqs@yahoo.com.

Phytochemicals and dietary fibers

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

THE FOOD AND NUTRITION RESEARCH Institute (FNRI) has always been at the forefront in educating the public on functional foods that provide health benefits beyond basic nutrition.

The FNRI encourages us to eat sufficient amounts of foods rich

in phytochemicals. Phyto is the Greek word for plant, and phytochemicals are natural bioactive compounds found in plant foods that work with other essential nutrients and dietary fiber.

Phytochemicals contain protective, disease-preventing com-

pounds. More than 900 different phytochemicals have been identified as components of food, and many more continue to be discovered today.

It is estimated that there may be more than 100 different phytochemicals in just one serving of vegetables.

Bright-colored veggies

Fruits and vegetables with bright colors—yellow, orange, red, green, blue and purple—generally contain high amounts of phytochemicals and nutrients.

Lycopene is a phytochemical found in tomato and pink grapefruit. Betacarotene is a pigment found in squash, carrots and green leafy vegetables. Isoestrogenes are found in soy products.

Although phytochemicals are not yet classified as essential nutrients—substances necessary for sustaining life—they have been identified as containing properties for aiding in disease prevention. Phytochemicals are associated with the prevention and/or treatment of at least four of the leading causes of deaths: cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and hypertension.

Cancer prevention

Since 25 years ago, the US National Cancer Institute Chemoprevention Program began evaluating phytochemicals for efficacy and applicability for preventing and treating diseases. The American Cancer Society recognizes also the health benefits of phytochemicals and has included the following in their guidelines for nutrition and cancer prevention.

• Choose most of the foods you eat from plant sources.

• Limit your intake of high-fat foods, particularly from animal sources.

• Be physically active. Achieve and maintain a healthy weight.

• Limit consumption of alcoholic beverages if you drink at all.

Fiber, too

Fruits and vegetables are also rich in dietary fibers, the part of food that resists digestion.

Fiber provides roughage, which helps prevent constipation, intestinal disorders and cancer. Fibers are found only in plant foods such as whole grains, fruits, vegetables, legumes, seeds and nuts. Rich sources of insoluble di-

etary fiber are bran (the outer covering of corn, oat, rice and wheat), whole grains (corn, rice, oat, and other cereals) and edible skins of fruits and vegetables.

Some fibers may be soluble and they help reduce blood cholesterol and aid in better nutrient absorption. Rich sources of soluble dietary fibers are oats, dry beans and legumes, apples, oranges, peaches, grapes, carrots, cabbage, okra, prunes, citrus fruits, and flour made from coconut residue (sapal).

A diet rich in phytochemicals and fibers can help maintain good health and save us a lot of money in medical bills.

Strategies

These simple strategies may help increase our dietary fruits, vegetables, and grains:

- Keep fruits and vegetables stocked and in sight.
- Reach for juice instead of coffee or soda.
- Add chopped fruits to cereal, yogurt, pancakes, muffins, or even a milkshake.
- Snack on fresh chopped carrots, celery, broccoli, cauliflower, and pepper.
- Add fresh greens, carrots, celery, parsley, tomatoes, and/or beans to your soups.

The FNRI has developed and standardized easy-to-do recipes using rich sources of phytochemicals and dietary fibers.

You may call the FNRI at 837-2934, 837-3164, e-mail mve@fnri.dost.gov.ph, or visit the website www.fnri.dost.gov.ph.

Olympiad winners, Gödel, math trick

EUREKA!

Queena N.
Lee-Chua

research (sorry, not Gödel but physics) since it has been bothering me for the last five years.

"Fans of the movie will recall that it was the humans who destroyed the atmosphere in an attempt to make solar energy inaccessible to the machines. It was this very act that led machines to eventually use humans as batteries. This premise is untenable from a thermodynamic perspective.

Humans (and most other organisms, for that matter) do not generate energy internally, but draw on energy in food. This energy when viewed from a system-level or life cycle perspective is in turn derived from solar energy. Hence the very notion of bioenergy being used as a substitute for solar power is erroneous. The calories in our food are nothing but stored solar energy."

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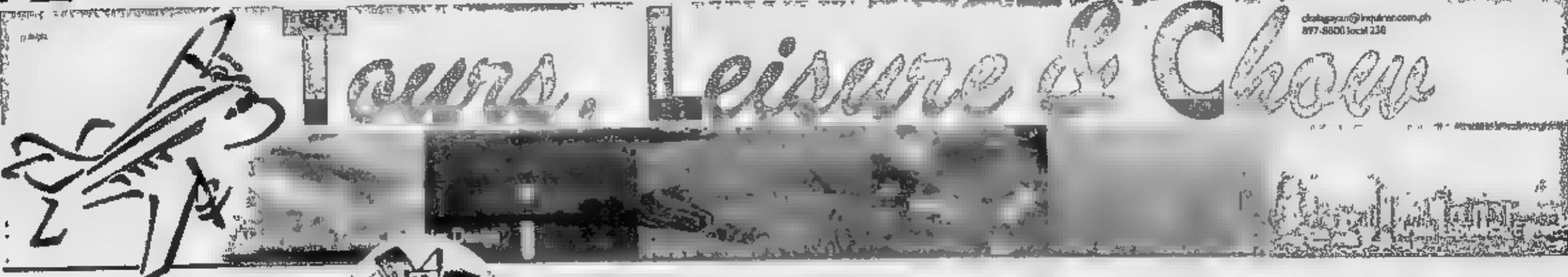
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(As of March 3, 2006)

| STOCKS | OPEN | HIGH | LOW | CLOSE | VOLUME | |
|---|-----------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|--------|
| Banco de Oro Univ. Bank | 34 | 35 | 34 | 35 | 750,400 | |
| Bank of the Phil. Islands | 59.5 | 59.5 | 59 | 59 | 1,720,200 | |
| Chico Banking Corp. | 600 | 660 | 655 | 655 | 650 | |
| Cebuana Savings Bank | 19 | 19 | 19 | 19 | 300 | |
| Export and Ind. Bank Inc. | 0.47 | 0.47 | 0.45 | 0.47 | 5,580,000 | |
| Equitable PCI Bank Inc. | 65 | 65 | 64 | 64.5 | 97,900 | |
| International Exch. Bank | 25.5 | 25.5 | 25 | 25 | 2,588,100 | |
| Metropolitan Banc. & Trust | 35 | 35.5 | 34 | 34 | 1,700,000 | |
| Philippine National Bank | 31.5 | 31 | 31.5 | 31.5 | 1,700,000 | |
| Phil. Savings Bank | 95 | 95 | 95 | 95 | 1,000 | |
| Real Comm. Banking Corp. | 13.75 | 13.75 | 13.75 | 13.75 | 2,000 | |
| Security Bank Corp. | 38 | 38.5 | 38 | 38.5 | 55,000 | |
| Union Bank of the Phil. | 35 | 35.5 | 34.5 | 35.5 | 55,000 | |
| PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc. | 0.98 | 0.98 | 0.98 | 0.98 | 850,000 | |
| Phil. Stock Exchange Inc. | 147 | 148 | 147 | 149 | 16,450 | |
| Sunlife Financial Inc. | 2200 | 2210 | 2200 | 2210 | 530 | |
| Wantage Corp. | 0.81 | 0.81 | 0.8 | 0.8 | 7,710,000 | |
| OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | |
| INDUSTRY: ENERGY, POWER & WATER | 45 | 45 | 44.5 | 44.5 | 314,500 | |
| First Gas Corp. | 42.5 | 44 | 42.5 | 43.5 | 842,500 | |
| Manila Electric Co. A | 13 | 13 | 12.75 | 12.75 | 95,300 | |
| Manila Electric Co. B | 18.25 | 18.5 | 18 | 18.25 | 755,600 | |
| Manila Water Co. Inc. | 6.4 | 6.5 | 6.2 | 6.4 | 3,520,000 | |
| Patron Corp. | 45 | 45 | 44 | 44 | 6,526,300 | |
| Trans-Asia Oil and Energy | 0.91 | 0.91 | 0.91 | 0.91 | 380,000 | |
| FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO | 3.55 | 3.8 | 3.55 | 3.8 | 44,000 | |
| Alaska Milk Corp. | 20.5 | 20.5 | 18.75 | 18.75 | 43,600 | |
| Binibig San Miguel Inc. | 35 | 36 | 35 | 36 | 107,700 | |
| Jollibee Foods Corp. | 0.74 | 0.74 | 0.74 | 0.74 | 10,000 | |
| RFA Corp. | 1.7 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 70,000 | |
| Roxas Holdings Inc. | 61.5 | 62 | 61 | 61.5 | 55,400 | |
| San Miguel Corp. A | 64 | 64.5 | 63.5 | 63.5 | 159,800 | |
| San Miguel Corp. B | 18.25 | 18.25 | 18 | 18.25 | 1,085,300 | |
| Universia Robina Corp. | 0.29 | 0.29 | 0.29 | 0.29 | 530,300 | |
| Virchow Corp. | 0.91 | 0.91 | 0.91 | 0.91 | 1,000 | |
| CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & RELATED SERVICES | 1.90 | 1.90 | 1.90 | 1.90 | 1,900,000 | |
| Southeast Asian Cement | 0.92 | 0.92 | 0.92 | 0.92 | 1,638,000 | |
| Engineering Equip. Inc. | 1.3 | 1.3 | 1.24 | 1.25 | 1,638,000 | |
| Holcim Philippines Inc. | 1 | 1.2 | 1 | 1.2 | 2,724,000 | |
| Global Equities Inc. | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 3,000,000 | |
| Pitcon Resources Inc. | 0.67 | 0.67 | 0.67 | 0.67 | 200,000 | |
| Stenline Manufacturing | 0.42 | 0.43 | 0.42 | 0.43 | 400,000 | |
| HOLDING FIRMS | 345 | 345 | 345 | 345 | 198,970 | |
| Ayala Corp. | 0.5 | 0.51 | 0.5 | 0.51 | 470,000 | |
| Alsons Cons. Res. Inc. | 4.85 | 4.95 | 4.85 | 4.95 | 372,000 | |
| Abcott Equity Ventures | 0.023 | 0.023 | 0.023 | 0.023 | 1,500,000 | |
| Alc Net Holdings Inc. | 2.42 | 2.44 | 2.42 | 2.44 | 2,555,000 | |
| APC Group Inc. | 0.22 | 0.23 | 0.21 | 0.23 | 210,000 | |
| Anglo Phil Holdings Corp. | 0.68 | 0.68 | 0.68 | 0.68 | 670,000 | |
| ATM Holdings Inc. B | 1.8 | 1.8 | 1.8 | 1.8 | 9,000 | |
| Bacolod Corp. Inc. | 6.5 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 6.5 | 12,000 | |
| Bentley Holdings Corp. | 0.95 | 0.98 | 0.95 | 0.97 | 2,780,000 | |
| DWC Holdings Inc. | 3.1 | 3.15 | 3.05 | 3.05 | 47,000 | |
| Filinvest Dev. Corp. | 1.84 | 2.08 | 1.94 | 2.06 | 6,540,000 | |
| House of Investments Inc. | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 50,000 | |
| JG Summit Holdings Inc. | 4.85 | 4.95 | 4.85 | 4.95 | 746,000 | |
| Medco Holdings | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.19 | 0.19 | 3,060,000 | |
| Mabuhay Holdings Corp. | 0.125 | 0.125 | 0.125 | 0.125 | 200,000 | |
| Pacifica | 0.24 | 0.24 | 0.235 | 0.235 | 2,400,000 | |
| Prima Orion Phils. Inc. | 0.011 | 0.011 | 0.011 | 0.011 | 10,000 | |
| Prime Media Holdings Inc. | 0.55 | 0.52 | 0.51 | 0.51 | 103,250 | |
| Solid Group Inc. | 0.25 | 0.25 | 0.23 | 0.23 | 100,000 | |
| SM Investments Corp. | 0.06 | 0.06 | 0.06 | 0.06 | 1,710,000 | |
| Unilab Res. & Holdings Co. | 0.115 | 0.12 | 0.115 | 0.12 | 1,710,000 | |
| Weltwide Industries Inc. | 0.135 | 0.135 | 0.13 | 0.13 | 900,000 | |
| PROPERTY | 11.25 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 7,162,000 | |
| Belle Corp. | 0.95 | 0.95 | 0.95 | 0.95 | 390,000 | |
| A Brown Company Inc. | 0.96 | 0.96 | 0.95 | 0.95 | 50,000 | |
| Crown Equities Inc. | 0.24 | 0.24 | 0.24 | 0.24 | 500,000 | |
| Cebu Holdings Inc. | 1.76 | 1.76 | 1.74 | 1.76 | 1,226,000 | |
| C&P Homes Inc. | 1.7 | 1.7 | 1.65 | 1.65 | 9,000 | |
| Cebu Bay Corp. | 0.22 | 0.23 | 0.22 | 0.22 | 5,700,000 | |
| Empire East Land Inc. | 0.48 | 0.48 | 0.45 | 0.45 | 180,000 | |
| Fairmont Holdings Inc. | 0.58 | 0.68 | 0.65 | 0.65 | 1,952,000 | |
| Filinvest Land Inc. | 1.22 | 1.22 | 1.22 | 1.22 | 5,000,000 | |
| Interport Res. | 0.004 | 0.004 | 0.004 | 0.004 | 5,000,000 | |
| Interport Res. B | 0.004 | 0.004 | 0.004 | 0.004 | 5,000,000 | |
| Kudu Properties | 0.21 | 0.21 | 0.21 | 0.21 | 270,000 | |
| PL-Estate, Inc. and Inc. | 0.48 | 0.48 | 0.47 | 0.47 | 1,350,000 | |
| Managworld Corp. | 1.48 | 1.5 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 29,752,000 | |
| Metra Pacific Corp. | 0.33 | 0.34 | 0.32 | 0.34 | 3,890,000 | |
| MARC Allied Ind. Inc. | 0.38 | 0.37 | 0.38 | 0.34 | 6,010,000 | |
| Philippine Estates Corp. | 0.14 | 0.14 | 0.14 | 0.14 | 89,000 | |
| Robinsons Land Corp. | 6.5 | 6.8 | 6.5 | 6.8 | 34,000 | |
| Phi Realty and Holdings | 0.22 | 0.22 | 0.215 | 0.215 | 1,070,000 | |
| SM Development Corp. | 1.42 | 1.44 | 1.42 | 1.42 | 50,900 | |
| SM Prime Holdings Inc. | 8 | 8 | 7.8 | 7.8 | 3,004,000 | |
| SM Prime Holdings Inc. | 0.135 | 0.135 | 0.13 | 0.13 | 900,000 | |
| SUNOCO HOLDINGS INC. | 8.3 | 8.3 | 7.9 | 8.2 | 4,726,000 | |
| SERVICE | 11.25 | 11.5 | 11.25 | 11.5 | 18,000 | |
| DIGITAL TELECOM PHILS. INC. | 0.88 | 0.87 | 0.88 | 0.88 | 850,000 | |
| Globe Telecom Inc. | 845 | 845 | 845 | 845 | 21,110 | |
| Philippine Tel. Corp. | 3.5 | 3.3 | 3.2 | 3.25 | 4,786,000 | |
| Phil. Long Dist. Tel Co. | 18.10 | 18.40 | 18.05 | 18.25 | 45,780 | |
| Boulevard Holdings Inc. | 0.165 | 0.17 | 0.165 | 0.17 | 3,480,000 | |
| Imperial Res. | 0.013 | 0.013 | 0.012 | 0.013 | 7,100,000 | |
| Tonics Inc. | 1.28 | 1.28 | 1.28 | 1.28 | 50,000 | |
| Island Info and Tech Inc. | 0.045 | 0.045 | 0.045 | 0.045 | 1,000,000 | |
| SM Communications Corp. | 0.0525 | 0.0525 | 0.0525 | 0.0525 | 9,500,000 | |
| Music Semiconductors Corp. | 1 | 1.24 | 1.24 | 1.24 | 50,000 | |
| Philweb Corp. | 0.026 | 0.027 | 0.026 | 0.026 | 254,600,000 | |
| TRANSPORTATION SERVICES | 1.96 | 1.98 | 1.98 | 1.98 | 7,000 | |
| Asian Terminal Term' Sv | 11.5 | 11.5 | 11.5 | 11.5 | 937,800 | |
| Kaputol Phils. Marine Inc. | 0.98 | 0.99 | 0.98 | 0.98 | 370,000 | |
| HOTEL & LEISURE | 4.1 | 4.1 | 4.1 | 4.1 | 2,000,000 | |
| Accasia Phils. Hotel Corp. | 1.74 | 1.75 | 1.74 | 1.74 | 2,658,000 | |
| Leisure & Resorts Corp. | 0.4 | 0.41 | 0.4 | 0.41 | 1,140,000 | |
| Waterfront Phils. Inc. | EDUCATION | 3.15 | 3.15 | 3.1 | 3.15 | 86,000 |
| Ideope Inc. | 7.9 | 8.3 | 7.9 | 8.2 | 4,726,000 | |
| DIVERSIFIED SERVICES | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 100 | |
| Paxys Inc. | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 69,300 | |
| CURRENCIES | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 100 | |
| March 3, 2006 | Euro | Dollar | Peso | Peso | | |
| Country | Unit | Equivalent | Equivalent | Equivalent | | |
| United States | Dollar | 0.630358 | 1,000000 | 51.2600 | | |
| Japan | Yen | 0.007170 | 0.006635 | 0.4426 | | |
| United Kingdom | Pound | 1.457112 | 1.754800 | 83.9510 | | |
| Hong Kong | Dollar | 0.107041 | 0.128909 | 6.6079 | | |
| Switzerland | Franc | 0.639770 | 0.770475 | 39.4945 | | |



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| City Garden Hotel-Makati Makati Ave., cor. Katipunan St., Makati City Tel. (02) 659-1111 Fax (02) 859-1415 Email: makaticitygardenhotels.com | City Garden Suites 1158 A. Mabini St., Ermita, Manila Tel. 536-1451 Fax 524-4844 Email: citygardenreservations@citygardenhotels.com |
| City Travel Hotel City Travel Hotel 15 Kipland Road, Baguio City Tel. (074) 445-0456 / Fax (074) 445-0457 | *CSB HOTEL A. Araneta Sr. & Rizal Avenue Arenales Ave., cor. Estrada St., Makati, Manila Tel. (02) 400-1333 Fax 600-7401 |
| Diamond Hotel Philippines Cor Dr. J. Quinto St., Roxas Blvd. Tel. (02) 528-2000 Fax 526-2255 | Dusit Hotel Nikko Dusit Hotel Nikko Ayala Center, 1223 Makati City Phl. Tel. 867-1333 Email: dusitnikko@dusit.com http://manila.dusit.com |
| Edsa Shangri-La Edsa Shangri-La Manila 1 Garden Way, Ortigas Center, Manila Tel. 633-8888 www.shangri-la.com | Evercrest Golf Club Resort, Inc. Km. 72 Bonifacio, Naic, Cavite Tel. (02) 712-9245 to 58 Fax (02) 712-9299 Manila Sales Office: 733-3822/733-9955 |
| Executive Plaza Hotel 630 A. Mabini St., Makati, Manila Tel. 523-1000 Fax 525-8979 Email: sales@executiveplazahotel.com www.executiveplazahotel.com | GARDEN GARDEN HOTEL & SUITES Garden Plaza Hotel & Suites 301 Belen St., Paco, Manila Tel. (632) 522-4835/ fax (632) 522-4840 |
| Golden Pine Hotel and Restaurant Intersection of Carino St. and Legarda Road, Baguio City Tel. (074) 444-9970 to 71/740-8975/ Fax (074) 446-0704 Email: goldenpinehotel@skynet.net | Grand Regal Hotel Davao J. Laurel St., Lanang, Davao City Tel. (082) 235-0888/(382) 234-1688 |
| HOTEL VENIZ Hotel Veniz No. 1 Abanue St. Baguio City Tel. (074) 446-0700 to 03 Fax (074) 446-0704 Email: hotelveniz@skynet.net www.hotelveniz.com | INTERCONTINENTAL Intercontinental Manila 1 Ayala Avenue, Makati City Tel. 815-97 www.intercontinental.com |
| Las Palmas Las Palmas Hotel Manila 6 A. Mabini St., Makati, Manila Tel. (02) 521-1000 Fax (02) 523-8917 www.laspalmashotel.com.ph | Mackay Island Resort Punta Engano Road, Lapu-Lapu Cabu Tel. (632) 231-0288/Fax (632) 231-1688 |
| Mandarin Oriental Manila Paseo de Roxas cor. Makati Ave., Makati City Tel. 658-8888 www.mandarinoriental.com | MANILA PAVILION Manila Pavilion Hotel UN Avenue, Ermita, Manila 1000 Tel. (632) 526-2121/ fax (632) 526-2552 www.manilapavilion.com.ph |
| New World Renaissance Hotel Esperanza St. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City Tel. 658-8888 Fax 811-2013 www.mariott.com | Oakwood Premier Ayala Center 6th Floor, Galleria 4, Ayala Center Makati City Metro Manila Tel. (632) 729-8888 Fax (632) 8101 Fax (632) 729-0000 Email: oakwoodph@oakwood.com.ph |
| PALMI PLAZA Palm Plaza Hotel Pedro Gil corner P. Adriatico St., Manila Tel. (02) 522-1000 Fax 525-2013 www.palmplazahotel.com | Royal Mandaya Hotel Pedro Gil St., Davao City Tel. (082) 225-6000/Fax (082) 225-1888 |
| Pearl Farm Beach Resort Kaputian Island Garden, City of Samal Tel. (082) 221-9970 to 73 Manila (02) 750-1896/Fax (082) 221-9979 | SUBIC Subic International Hotel Subic Bay, Free Port Zone, Olongapo City Manila 243-2222/F 243-0852 http://www.subichotel.com |
| SOMERSLET Somerset Salcedo, Makati H.V. delos Cocos St. cor. P. Leviste St., Salcedo Village, 1227 Makati City Tel. 888-6656 Fax 888-6455 | SUMMER PLACE HOTEL Summer Place Hotel Km. 288 Marcos Highway, Baguio City Tel. (074) 446-0560, 446-5400-01 www.SummerPlaceBaguio.com |
| SOMERSLET Somerset Millennium, Makati No. 104 Aguinaldo St., Legazpi Village, 1229 Makati City Tel. 888-0505 Fax 812-7721 | Tai Vista Hotel Managed by Fuego Hotels & Properties Km. 60 Aguinaldo Highway, Tagaytay City Tel. (632) 886-4325, (632) 413-1000 Email: tavidata@fuegohotels.com |
| SOMERSLET Somerset Olympia, Makati No. 7912, Mikati Ave., 1220 Makati City Tel. 812-0101 Fax 8-8-254 | THE RANCH PHIL The Marco Polo CM Rego St. Davao City 8000 Tel. (082) 221-0888/Fax (082) 225-0111 www.marcopolohotels.com |
| The Bellevue Manila North Bridgeway, Northgate Alabang, Muntinlupa Tel. (632) 771-8181, fax (632) 77-8282 www.thebellevuemana.com.ph | Waterfront Hotel Lahug 1 Salinas Drive, Lahug, Cebu City Tel. (6312) 232-4888/Fax (6312) 232-6080 www.waterfronthotels.net |
| The Regent Hotel Educa, Angeles St., Nagoya City Tel. (6354) 4722526/Fax (6354) 4722525 | Waterfront Hotel Mactan 1 Airport Road, Lapu-Lapu City, 6015 Tel. (6352) 440-1886/Fax (6352) 340-5693 www.waterfronthotels.net |

MANDARIN ORIENTAL,
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morel, braised tea, black,
fresh oyster, and other
mushroom varieties in this
culinary tribute by Tin
Hau's master chefs, from
March 6 to 19.

Chinese food lovers will
delight and benefit from
the healthy goodness of
mushrooms. Low in calo-
ries, mushrooms contain
high levels of nutrients
such as proteins, vitamins,
and minerals, have no

Wild about mushrooms at Mandarin Tin Hau

cholesterol, and are virtu-
ally free of fat and sodium.
It is believed that mush-
rooms increase immunity,
reduce cholesterol, im-
prove digestion, promote
blood circulation, and re-
duce fatigue.

For enquiries and reser-
vations, call Tin Hau at
750-8888 extension 2422
and 2424.

THE SEARCH FOR THE VIDEOKE STAR

The most happening hotspot at the southern Metro Manila area invites singing stars to compete in the hotel's prestigious singing competition—The Bellevue Idol. Open to all employees, the contest will be held every first Monday of the month at the hotel's 20/20 entertainment bar starting March 6 and will culminate in a Grand Finals on Sept. 11. The grand prize winner will win prizes amounting to P100,000 including round-trip tickets to Boracay for two including accommodations and P30,000 pocket money. The winner will also receive a one-month contract as the Bellevue Host at 20/20 bar every Videoke Night. For inquiries, call 771-8181.



City Garden Hotel's March Bonus!

SINCE IT OPENED, CITY GAR-
DEN Hotel Makati, along Makati
Avenue, has slowly gained the
reputation of being the perfect
hotel for businessmen, exec-
utives and individuals.

Its luxurious yet cozy environ-
ment immediately transports you
away from the hustle and bustle
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forting environment, a perfect re-
treat for a stressed out business-
man. Its 160-well appointed Italian
inspired rooms make for a
comfortable stay. For as low as
P1,450 per person based on twin
sharing, all the rooms are
equipped with the latest room
amenities.

For one-on-one meetings and
get-together, City Garden Hotel
Makati has two restaurants that
you can choose from. Le Jardin

Restaurant, with its warm and re-
laxing dining experience, and its
more popular Roofdeck Bar and
Grill gives you a cozy dining ex-
perience with a great view of the
Makati skyline, is offering its
Chef's Special of "Ribs BBQ &
Grills."

For the health and beauty buff
City Garden Hotel Makati boasts
of a well-equipped Health Club, a
swimming pool and the Body &
Face by Mendez Spa, to indulge
on. A perfect way to relax.

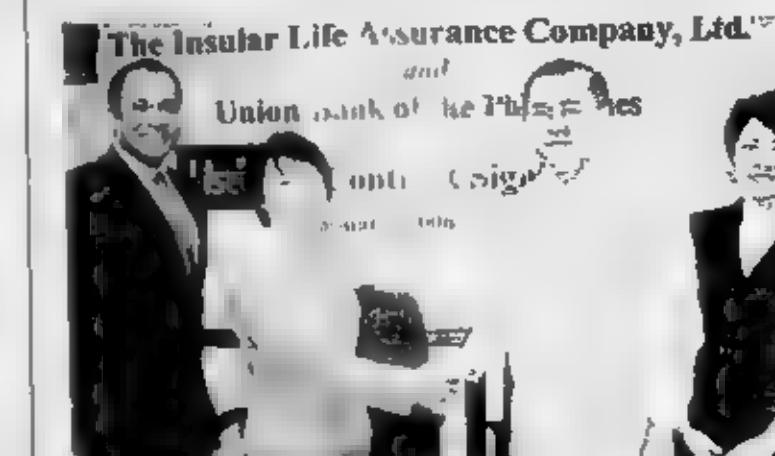
City Garden Hotel Makati is lo-
cated in Makati's restaurant strip
at 7870 Makati Avenue corner
Kalayaan Avenue, Makati City.
For reservations or inquiries,
please call (02) 899-1111, or its
domestic toll free number 1-800-
101-GARDEN (427336), or at
www.citygardenhotels.com

THE EXECUTIVE PLAZA HOTEL'S PIONEER TEAM

The pioneer employees of The Executive Plaza Hotel were recently honored for their dedication and commitment to the Hotel. The Hotel, now on its five years of service is successfully growing to become one of the top three star hotels in Metro Manila. Shown in the photo are (front row, from left) room attendant Ronald Cuelana, PR assistant Michelle C. Aglipay, F&B chief accountant

Anaiza Pagaduan, corporate executive housekeeper Patty A. Martin, telephone operator Madelyn F. Realce, front office supervisor Medz D. Jimenez and room attendant Abelardo Raga (back row, from left) engineering staff Glen Illeto, bellman Ronald Romasanta and Darvin Joseph B. Reyes, and captain waiter Rufino Marmolejo, Jr.

People, Events & Products



INSULAR LIFE PROVIDES CREDIT LIFE INSURANCE TO UNION BANK CARDHOLDERS

Insular Life and UnionBank take their partnership to a new level with U-Secure, a credit life insurance facility for Union Bank Visa clients. Under the partnership, Insular Life will provide life insurance and accident benefits to Union Bank Visa cardholders by paying their card's outstanding balance up to the sum of P400,000 in case of death or total permanent disability. The program also includes a double benefit feature where the amount paid

to Union Bank to pay off the balance on the card will also be paid to the cardholder's beneficiaries. Shown in photo after the contract signing are, (from left) Union Bank first vice president Manuel Santiago, Jr., IL senior vice president and sales operations head Marietta C. Gorrez, Union Bank executive vice president Edwin Bautista, and IL senior assistant vice president and worksite marketing head Aileen Beltrano.

PTAA livens up Pinatubo Aeta Children

IT STARTED WITH A NUMBER OF Aeta children walking in the vast xyle field at the foot of Mt. Pinatubo going to school in Sitio Alunan (four hours hike) who caught the attention of the immediate past PTAA president Nit Ragaza while on his way representing PTAA in another function together with Tourism Secretary Ace Durano in October last year.

There were three teachers who worked voluntarily to teach the 110 Aeta children from Grade 1 to 4. They were in need of school supplies and even food to eat. The PTAA held a show for a cause dubbed as "PTAA and Galileo Go Retro" on Nov. 16 at Fort Bonifacio, Taguig. The PTAA members, guests and sponsors joined their hands and raised funds for these children and their families.

On Dec. 19, the PTAA officers and the secretariat went to Sitio Alunan which was four hours away from the town of Capas, Tarlac, and could only be reached by foot and 4x4 off-road vehicles. The PTAA officers handed over a hundred thousand worth of T-shirts, notebooks, school supplies, umbrellas, foot wear, infant food, medicines, groceries for their feeding program and more goodies to the 110 Aeta schoolchildren and their families.

On Feb. 4 this year, PTAA officer turned over the donation from the United Laboratories Inc to the representatives of the Aeta children. UNILAB sponsored assorted vitamins for children/infant, paracetamol, anti-cough and cold medicines. This was held at the Hacienda Luisita, Capas, Tarlac.

The need to continuously support the Aeta Children and their families is appreciated. For your donation and further details, you may call the PTAA Secretariat at 552-0026 to 29.



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BUSINESS

ADB clears turnover of Napocor debt

By Michelle V. Remo

THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK has given its formal consent for the government to transfer the debts of National Power Corp. to the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp.

Napocor's debt to ADB has been pegged at about \$500 million, or P26.5 billion.

The government plan to turn Napocor's liabilities over to PSALM is seen to pave the way for the privatization of the power firm's assets, officials said.

Investors consider Napocor's huge debts to be a major hindrance in the

efforts to sell its power assets.

Officials from the Department of Finance, National Transmission Corp., PSALM and Napocor represented the government yesterday during the signing of the Omnibus Amendment Agreement.

ADB country director Thomas Crouch signed the agreement on behalf of the institution.

Following the transfer, the ADB will now have to run after PSALM, instead of Napocor, to collect on debts.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the agreement would make it easier for the government to get the consent of other creditors of Napocor, like the World Bank and the Japan

Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), to transfer its other debts to

Napocor owes a total of \$7 billion, or about P372 billion, to all its creditors.

The universal consent is important because it will enable us to accelerate the privatization process and manage the loan obligations of the National Power Corp. more prudently," said Nieves Osorio, president of PSALM.

The privatization of heavily indebted Napocor, which had been a burden to the similarly troubled government, has been cited as one of the key measures to improve the country's fiscal standing.

The principle behind the "fit and proper" set of banking rules is provided in both the General Banking Act of 1949 as well as in the General Banking Law of 2000.

The law also provides the BSP with the power to bar those found unfit to be a bank director or officer, and to put in place a screening process that will ensure that an individual is fit and proper to hold such a sensitive position.

The object of the revised rules is to

ensure that a bank's management possesses a high degree of integrity and adequate experience, education, training and competence to do the job and afford better protection to depositors and the public in general.

The BSP has adopted the same "fit and proper" framework as the Bank of England. But top officials have admitted that the rules have proven to be less effective because they could easily be overturned in Philippine courts.



Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Favila (left), Interior and Local Government Undersecretary Melchor Rosales and Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla (right) inspect LPG tanks seized during a raid. Authorities have confiscated 165 LPG cylinders that do not bear the Philippine Standard mark from five establishments in Quezon City and Caloocan.

For bankers, stiffer 'fit and proper' rules

By Doris C. Dumiao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS has issued a circular imposing stiffer "fit and proper" rules to govern officers and directors of banks and quasi-banks.

The BSP circulated the tighter set of rules on Feb. 10, expanding the scope of disqualification of directors and officers by adding other crimes and offenses which the Monetary Board approved last January.

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Gov't hopes to widen tax relief coverage

THE GOVERNMENT hopes to raise at least P10 billion this year from taxes and duties that have been bolstered by administrative reforms.

Once it meets its target, the government will then widen the coverage of its income tax relief program to include more taxpayers.

The Department of Finance said that of the amount, P8 billion should be raised by the Bureau of Internal Revenue, while P2 billion must come from the Bureau of Customs.

Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran said only upon realization of the expected revenues could the DOF endorse an increase in the personal exemptions of income taxpayers.

The BIR recently implemented measures to improve its collection effort.

Tax measures

The measures are "tax mapping," where BIR officials visit establishments to check on their tax compliance, the filing of charges against tax evaders, the grant of an amnesty-type program, and enhancement of its auditing capabilities.

The Bureau of Customs is working on improving its revenue collection through tightened monitoring of shipments, computerization and a revitalized drive against smuggling.

A bill has been filed in Congress seeking to increase by 50 percent the amounts of personal exemptions—a move that will provide relief to taxpayers burdened by the recent increase in the value-added tax rate.

Deductions

Should the bill be enacted into law, taxpayers will be granted the following amounts of allowable deductions from their taxable income: P30,000 for single taxpayers, P37,500 for heads of family, and P48,000 for married individuals. The bill likewise seeks to raise to P12,000 the amount of additional deduction per dependent.

But the DOF said it would not be endorsing the bill, saying the government still could not afford the potential revenue losses, estimated to run into billions.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves earlier said the DOF wanted Congress to simply focus on another pending bill seeking to exempt minimum wage earners from the income tax. He said the expected revenue loss from the second bill, estimated at P500 million a year, was something the government could afford.

Minimum wage earners are those whose annual income does not exceed P60,000.

Michelle V. Remo

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY, Port District Office - Visayas, through its Bids and Awards Committee - Engineering Project (BAC-EP), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

A: Name of Contract: Construction of Tourist Assistance Center

Port of Tagbilaran, Tagbilaran City

Construction of 1-storey Building

Brief Description: Approved Budget: P6,269,679.46

Source of Funds: PPA Corporate Fund

Contract Duration: One Hundred Fifty (150) Calendar Days

PCAB Registration: Small B "Building & Industrial Plant"

Required Equipments:

| | | | |
|----|---------|------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 | 1 unit | 6 Wheeler Truck | Owed/Leased |
| 2 | 2 units | Bar Cutter | |
| 3 | 2 units | One Bagger Concrete Mixer | |
| 4 | 2 units | Concrete Vibrator | Owed |
| 5 | 1 unit | Compressor w/ spray gun | Owed |
| 6 | 1 unit | Concrete Cutter | Owed/Leased |
| 7 | 1 unit | Oxy-Acetylene Cutting Outfit | Owed/Leased |
| 8 | 1 unit | Compressor w/ Jackhammer | Owed |
| 9 | 1 unit | Welding Machine | Owed |
| 10 | 1 unit | Plate Compactor | Owed/Leased |

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB license and registration particulars applicable to the type and cost of the contract to be bid, have key personnel and equipment available for the prosecution of the contract, must have completed a contract/project similar in nature and complexity to the contract to be bid within the past Five (5) years immediately preceding the publication of this invitation with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and meet the other eligibility requirements stated in the Eligibility Statement. Applications for eligibility, as well as the preliminary examination of bids, will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" criteria. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid. In accordance with the IRR-A of RA 9184, a contract will be awarded only to the lowest calculated and responsive bidder.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

| BAC Activities | Schedule |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility | March 13-24, 2006 |
| 2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms | March 13-31, 2006 |
| 3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements | April 7, 2006 |

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office - Visayas, CIP Complex, Sergio Osmeña Blvd North Reclamation Area, Cebu City upon their submission of a LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of P1,100.00 (inclusive of VAT) to the Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office - Visayas Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of P2,500.00 (inclusive of VAT) to the Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office - Visayas Cashier.

The Philippine Ports Authority, Port District Office - Visayas reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to the award of contract without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) JAMES J. GANTALAO
BAC Chairman

PPA March 4 & 15, 2006

PROPERTY

Creating a place of retreat and relaxation

By Charles E. Buban

FOR THE MANY INQUIRIES THEY receive about their place, this retired couple has one uniform response: "We haven't decided on that yet and at the moment, this is exclusively for our grandchildren (as well as family friends)."

Opening their place to the public is farthest from the couple's minds.

In fact, when Dr. Cirilo and Rosalina Sanchez decided last year to build this place—a 4,000 sq.m resort-like garden in San Jose, Nueva Ecija—all they wanted was a place where their grandchildren, all 11 of them, could come together and take a respite from the scorching summer heat.

"Before, we would all go to some nearby resorts (which are not very many in Nueva Ecija) or take several hours drive to some place else. It can get really tiresome sometimes so my wife and I decided why not convert a portion of our rice fields here and create a place where we could also enjoy resort-like amenities but much more private. Besides, my wife and I could use a place where we can relax and retreat from the daily grinds of life," says Cirilo, a former health officer in Nueva Ecija who still

oversees a rice mill business.

The couple didn't need to look very far for help to realize their plan as they asked the services of Lorenz Inos, a self-taught landscape artist turned sought-after design pro who is based in Cabanatuan.

What they want

"Initially, I asked the couple what they want: Does it have to be a splash of color? What are the structures they would like to find in the place. Does it need to be low-maintenance? Is water a problem? What about adding several water elements like fishing lagoon, waterfall, and swimming pool? All these things must be considered," Inos says.

The first challenge was where to source the water for the garden, so the couple constructed a deep well. Once a steady supply of freshwater was established, designing the resort garden got much easier.

"From the simplest pool to the most ornate fountain, no feature adds greater value to this planned resort-like garden than a body of water," explains Inos after constructing a swimming pool and a wading pool (complete with waterfalls) as well as a 2-meter deep, 500-square-meter lagoon, which he filled with ordinary and red tilapia as well as *lutong*.



THE GUIDING idea for this resort-like garden is to make it a living environment, says Inos who wanted the whole place to be a living space where one can do various open-air activities.

"Feeding the fishes can be a relaxing break in your daily routine," admits Cirilo.

Native plants

The next was incorporating native plants into the garden's landscape. Inos says plants like carabao grass, bromeliads, and palm trees, create a lower-maintenance garden.

"Using native plants are becoming more popular nowadays because of the



THE COUPLE enjoys strolling around the garden (or sometimes lounge on one of several cabanas that dot their garden) as they consider this relaxing and great stress reliever.

growing awareness of the many qualities they bring to a garden. Native plants are more adapted to our climate, and have fewer problems with disease and insects," Inos explains.

Besides, Rosalina Sanchez said enjoying the flowers, textures and colors of the plants is very relaxing and a great stress reliever.

Another element Inos incorporated in the resort-garden is the use of antique woods, driftwoods, tree roots and old molave and yakal hardwoods, which were sourced from dismantled railroad tie and from demolished Spanish/Filipino-styled colonial homes.

"Collecting these items proved to be the toughest as it took us more than six months scouring several provinces (like La Union, Benguet and Ilocos) where there are still abandoned railroad tracks, old houses being demolished or collectors of this type of materials," recalled Inos.

In the end, the resort garden, which is now 90-percent complete, has created a restful refuge characterized by shade, shelter and privacy that the couple has envisioned.

Says Rosalina, "Finally, we now have a place to unwind, where we could entertain family and friends and where we could reconnect with nature."



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AN UNPRENTIOUS house made of tin, with the warmth preserved inside.



THE ANGLICAN church: a landmark in the center of the quaint town of Sagada.

A weekend in Sagada

ON A ROBUST WEEKEND TREK to Sagada, Mt. Province, my friends and I experienced a three-fold treat. Primarily, the cool climate and idyllic surroundings were highly conducive to physical recharging and spiritual recuperation.

Second, we learned how ingeniously the local folks have coped with and adapted to the encroaching modernization. And, finally, we were roused to an awareness of the effects of our actions on the environment.

Recharging, recuperation

We were billeted in a charming place called Rock Inn, an unassuming place that proved to be a comfortable and restful refuge. It

LIVING ARCHITECTURE

Marcos de Guzman Jr.

was built along the lines of a typical sagada house, mainly constructed of tin in order to collect and preserve warmth indoors. Nestled on a hill overlooking a rocky landscape, it constantly reminded me that I was far from the city.

An invigorating distance away, we found further testament to the remoteness of our hideaway in interesting caves, majestic water-

falls, sparkling springs, lofty pine trees and awesome rice terraces. To top off our explorations, we always came home to an excellent cup of homegrown sagada coffee. These were truly days that awakened both the soul and the sensibilities.

Coping and adapting

The town of Sagada is a quaint collection of little houses along one main concrete road. It is a community dotted with tiny coffee shops, souvenir shops and art galleries. The standard houses of tin or corrugated galvanized iron sheets, which I used to think of as unsightly, I now recognize to be the people's most practical building material.



ROCK Inn and Cafe is also made of tin, but softened by greenery.

It is not too expensive for this farming community and it is lightweight enough to be transported over rocky and mountainous terrain. Their buildings may be spartan looking on the outside and may not be picturesque enough to go with the rice terraces, but what I now appreciate is a people with very limited options making the best of what they have.

I wondered if living in a house of tin meant very cold indoor temperatures as well, since tin is not a good insulator. But one day in the middle of a tiring hike when hunger forced us to seek out strangers for help, Ate Susan, one of the local residents, welcomed us into her seemingly-

unimposing home.

We discovered that the interiors could be quite extraordinary because the floor, walls and ceiling were all made from solid pine wood panels 10 times superior to the standard items now offered in the open real estate market. We not only felt the sincerity of her hospitality, but likewise the warmth and cheer of her home. The aroma of pine smelt almost as good as the food she unselfishly prepared for us.

Environment awareness

At a corner newsstand, we chatted with a vendor about the recent landslide in Southern Leyte, and she mentioned with all simplicity that they have avoided any similar occurrences because they have been careful to replant the trees they have cut. It had apparently been ingrained in the people to give back to the land that which they have taken. This is not only a just and noble view, it is a profound understanding of the basic laws of nature as well. Man is the steward of his environment. If we use nature responsibly, we will never be hostage to it.

That weekend in Sagada was an eye-opener in many ways. We allowed nature to sweep us in its grandeur. The people revealed themselves to us in their warmth and simplicity. And the mix of these two elements showed us that this little town high up in the mountains is one of the best little corners of our land.

Megaworld's McKinley Hill Village sets sales record

MCKINLEY HILL VILLAGE, A HIGH-END residential subdivision at the 50-hectare McKinley Hill mixed-use project of Megaworld Corp. in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, is 70 percent sold. Since its launch in May 2004, its prime residential lots, with an average size of 238 square meters, have attracted a growing number of investors.

McKinley Hill Village is bounded on the northeast by C5 Road, and is located near the prestigious Forbes Park subdivision and the Manila Golf and Country Club.

Within easy reach

The project is now complete, as is Upper McKinley Road, the two-kilometer, tree-lined main avenue that connects it to the Makati cen-

tral business district. "Residents of McKinley Hill Village now have a fast and hassle-free route to the Ayala Center via Upper McKinley Road, which links up with the existing McKinley Road," said Noli Hernandez, Megaworld vice president for marketing.

Apart from Makati, other key destinations such as Ortigas Center and the Ninoy Aquino International Airport are within easy reach.

Five elegantly designed model homes have been drawing visitors to the project site, whose focal point is an exclusive leisure area near the gated entrance.

Clubhouse

A perfect weekend recreation spot is a Tuscan-themed clubhouse,

already complete. The clubhouse features stonework accents, textured walls, faux timber beams, an earth-toned facade, floors in textured tile finish and arched doorways.

As the centerpiece of the amenity area, it hosts a trellised courtyard, fitness facility and multipurpose area. Other upcoming amenities are a combined free-form and lap pool, a children's wading pool and a landscaped playground.

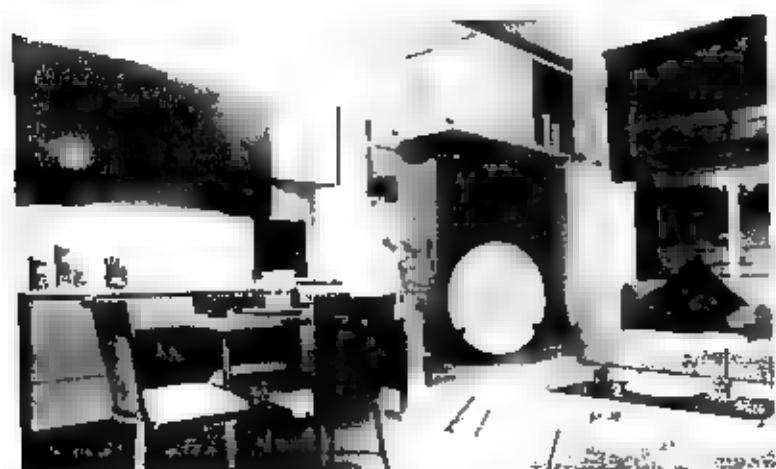
The McKinley Hill Village is among Megaworld's ongoing residential projects that have set a record as the fastest selling in Fort Bonifacio. These include the six-tower Forbeswood Heights and The Bellagio I and II at the Forbes Town Center in Bonifacio Global City.



ANOTHER PALM GROVE TURNOVER

Nearly 85 percent complete, Palm Grove Condominium Phase 2 has already started the turnover of one of its newest buildings, Peach Palm. With Phase 1 already sold out, DMCI Homes has built five more medium-rise condo buildings to comprise Phase 2 of the development. Peach Palm, Windmill Palm A and B and Paradise Palm A and B, each with four floors and two bedroom units, are opening up 76 more units for the project. Palm Grove Condominiums is a Caribbean-inspired enclave developed by DMCI Homes in Better Living, Parañaque, which integrates exclusivity and convenience in urban living. For inquiries call 888-333 or visit www.dmcihomes.com.

Crown Asia holds Picasso Tower groundbreaking at Presidio



THE CAREFUL layout and modern design of the dining and living areas offer a comfortable retreat.



WIDE windows welcome the fresh breeze and natural lighting into the intricately designed master's bedroom.

A SECURE FUTURE FOR THEIR FAMILY tops the list of priorities of young, active urbanites. But today's trying times allow no shortcuts, straining this equals years of hard work coupled with determination, making wise choices and acquiring veritable investments.

The first quarter of the year signaled the fulfillment of more lifelong dreams as the country's biggest homebuilder, Crown Asia held the groundbreaking of the second tower of Presidio at Brittany Bay—the Picasso Garden Condo Residence.

Architectural masterpiece

As the first vertical development of Crown Asia, Presidio at Brittany Bay is an architectural masterpiece of 16 towers interplaying in height and size that redefine urban living. The 6.8-hectare enclave is located at the boundary of thriving Sucat and City of Taguig, offering a wonderful view of the Sierra Madre Mountains and Laguna de Bay as its backdrop. The charming design style of San Francisco's neo-Victorian architecture serves as the encompassing theme for Presidio.

The incorporation of nature into a vertical residence lends a unique characteristic to the Picasso Garden Condo Residence. While other space-deprived condominiums around the metro leave no room for lush greens, at Picasso residents can enjoy walkways left open to cool air and select units with a garden in its backyard. The tower itself is also surrounded by beautiful landscaping.

Fresh alternative

The 7-story, V-shaped structure of Picasso is a fresh alternative from the traditional vertical design of most condominiums. With the spread of three wings per floor, each unit is

granted more natural lighting and cool breeze from the bay. Five units are limited to each wing to ensure privacy and generous breathing room for the residents.

Units at the Picasso Tower are thoughtfully designed to suit the unique needs and taste of each individual and family. Prices range from P1.7 to P2.3 million.

• 1-bedroom unit. Maximized living space and ingenious layout make this 39-sq-m residence perfect for independent singles and young couples.

• 2-bedroom unit. Beginning families will find the 51-sq-m residence a comfortable retreat with two bedrooms, toilet and bath, spacious dining and living areas, kitchen and a linen closet for more storage space.

Presidio's "city by the bay" features a collection of low- and mid-rise, residential and mixed-use (comprised of residential and commercial units) condominiums.

5 towers

Picasso is among the first five towers Crown Asia primarily launched for Presidio:

• Da Vinci Tower, Presidio's first tower which is already near completion is a charming 5-story mixed-use condo.

• Rembrandt Tower, a 10-story garden condo offering exclusivity and the luxury of bigger residences with only five units per floor;

• Michelangelo Tower, a versatile 10-story garden condo rise featuring the largest selection of

model units—the typical unit, loft-type or bi-level units, garden units and lavish penthouse units;

• Monet Tower, the 12-story condo is the highest rise among the Y-shaped garden residences and nestled in the heart of Presidio to offer the best vista of the bay and mountains.

Presidio boasts of a Village Center to house leisure and athletic amenities and facilities and a Town Center to offer the convenience of living just 10 meters away from commercial establishments while maintaining privacy and security for its residents.

Property previews may be arranged by calling Crown Asia at 718-3465 and 718-3400, or visit www.crownasia.com.ph on the web.



THE PICASSO Garden Condo stands out from Presidio's self-contained, multilevel hub by the bay.

Int'l construction, mining show promises to boost billion-peso industries

THE PHILIPPINES REAFFIRMS ITS POSITION as a prime destination for international exhibitions and conferences with two of the biggest trade shows this year.

Konstruktura Asya 2006, which will be mounted by the Philippine Constructors Association, is the only international exhibition of the Asia-Pacific construction industry.

Also set to further advance the local mining industry is Mining Asya 2006, which is also being organized by PCA and co-organized with the Chamber of Mines and the Philippine Mine Safety and Environment Association. This reinforces the bond between these three powerful organizations covering the construction and mining industry.

Both world-class exhibitions are scheduled on March 15-18 at the World Trade Center Metro Manila.

Roving exhibition

Konstruktura Asya 2006 is an annual roving exhibition held to coincide with IFAWPCA's country membership meeting where PCA is the founding member. This year is an extraordinary event as PCA will host IFAWPCA's 35th convention and will celebrate its golden anniversary.

"One can never underestimate the significance of hosting such a prestigious event. Armed with the confirmation from various foreign delegations coming to Manila in March, exhibitors at the

show will surely be exposed to a totally new market that is interested in investing in the Philippines," said Jorge Consunji, PCA president.

Region's biggest gathering

The show alone is expected to attract over 700 international buyers and 20,000 local visitors and buyers. Key decision makers and business leaders from all over the Asia-Pacific region are expected to attend the event.

The event is expected to be one of the region's biggest gathering of local and international trade buyers and visitors composed of architects, builders, designers, developers, mining companies, engineers, purchasers and end-users.

Mining Asya 2006, on the other hand, offers the best business opportunities for companies to showcase their state-of-the-art equipment, products and services to the global mining industry that is ready to invest in equipment and new technology.

Mining Asya 2006 shall also cater to providers of mining-related services for exploration, mine production, processing or preparation, material handling, environmental remediation and safety.

Over 2,000 foreign investors have confirmed their visit to Mining Asya 2006 for future investment potentials.

Business networking

To further emphasize the relevance

of both mining and construction to each other, the organizers have put together a business networking and business-matching activity where the construction industry will be able to provide the mining industry with potential business opportunities and vice versa.

Various product presentations and demonstrations have also been prepared to equip the market with up-to-date information on both industries.

For more information, call Jing Lagandaon, deputy managing director of Global Link Marketing & Management Services Inc., the event manager, at 750-8588, fax 750-8585 or e-mail jing.lagandaon@globallinkph.com.

MEZZA RESIDENCES: HIGH-RISE LIVING AT ITS BEST

From the country's most respected names in retailing and mall development comes a project that's soon to be a by-word in condominium living—the Mezza Residences.

Situated at Aurora Boulevard corner Araneta and Gulayan Streets in the heart of Quezon City, the impressive Mezza Residences has four 38-storey residential towers. Offering one-bedroom, two-bedroom, three-bedroom, and suite units with introductory prices ranging from one to five million, Mezza Residences is suited for young professionals yearning for their first taste of independence or starting-out families seeking a place to call home.

"Mezza Residences is metropolis living at its most convenient," shares Julie Jalandoni, Assistant Vice President for Sales and Marketing of SM Development Corporation (SMDC). "Everything one can ever need is right here, thus saving on gas, energy, and precious time. We really had the lifestyle of today's urbanites in mind in developing this project—addressing as many of their living requirements."



The Mezza Residences truly finds its hallmark on convenience. But more than just that, SMDC puts this together in a great package with well-planned floor areas and generous open spaces.

Mezza Residences takes pride in its lush greens. Unique to this project is its sprawling 1,000 square meter lawn—an inviting place where families can have a picnic, play catch with the kids, or take an afternoon nap. Giving importance to healthy living, a Zen-inspired garden with a meditation area and a reflexology path relaxes the mind and spirit of the weariest urban dweller. Kids can soak up the sun in the kiddie pool while adults can stay fit by swimming in the 25-meter lap pool.

Here at Mezza Residences, it's all about living the city life to the fullest.

It is a short distance away from the Central Colleges of the Philippines, the Immaculate Heart of Mary College, the UERM Hospital, the UERM Memorial Medical Center, the LRT 2 Sta. Mesa Station, and the bustling Araneta area. Everything indeed is within your reach. The Mezza Residences is a project of the SMDC. For inquiries, call 031-51-51 or 0919-888-1203. Log on to the SMDC website at www.smdevelopment.com. Model units are available for viewing at the SM City Sta. Mesa.

mezza RESIDENCES



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A thousand square meter lawn

A total of 8,000 square meters of amenities and open space dedicated to bringing you fun and recreation

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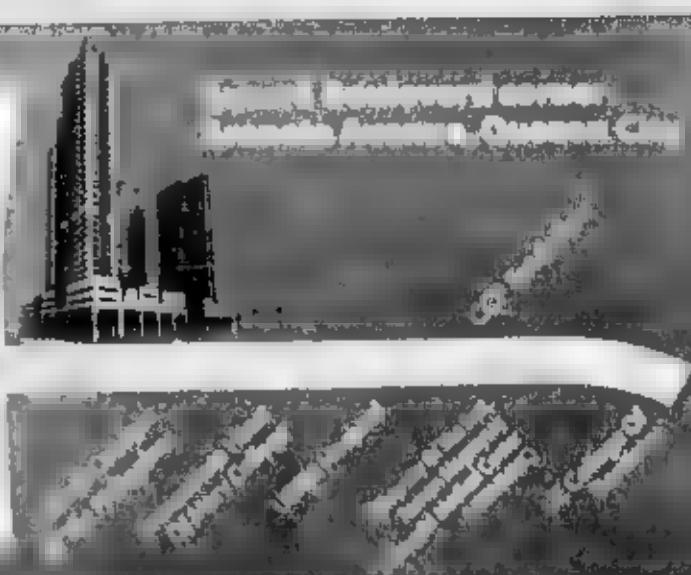


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SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 2006

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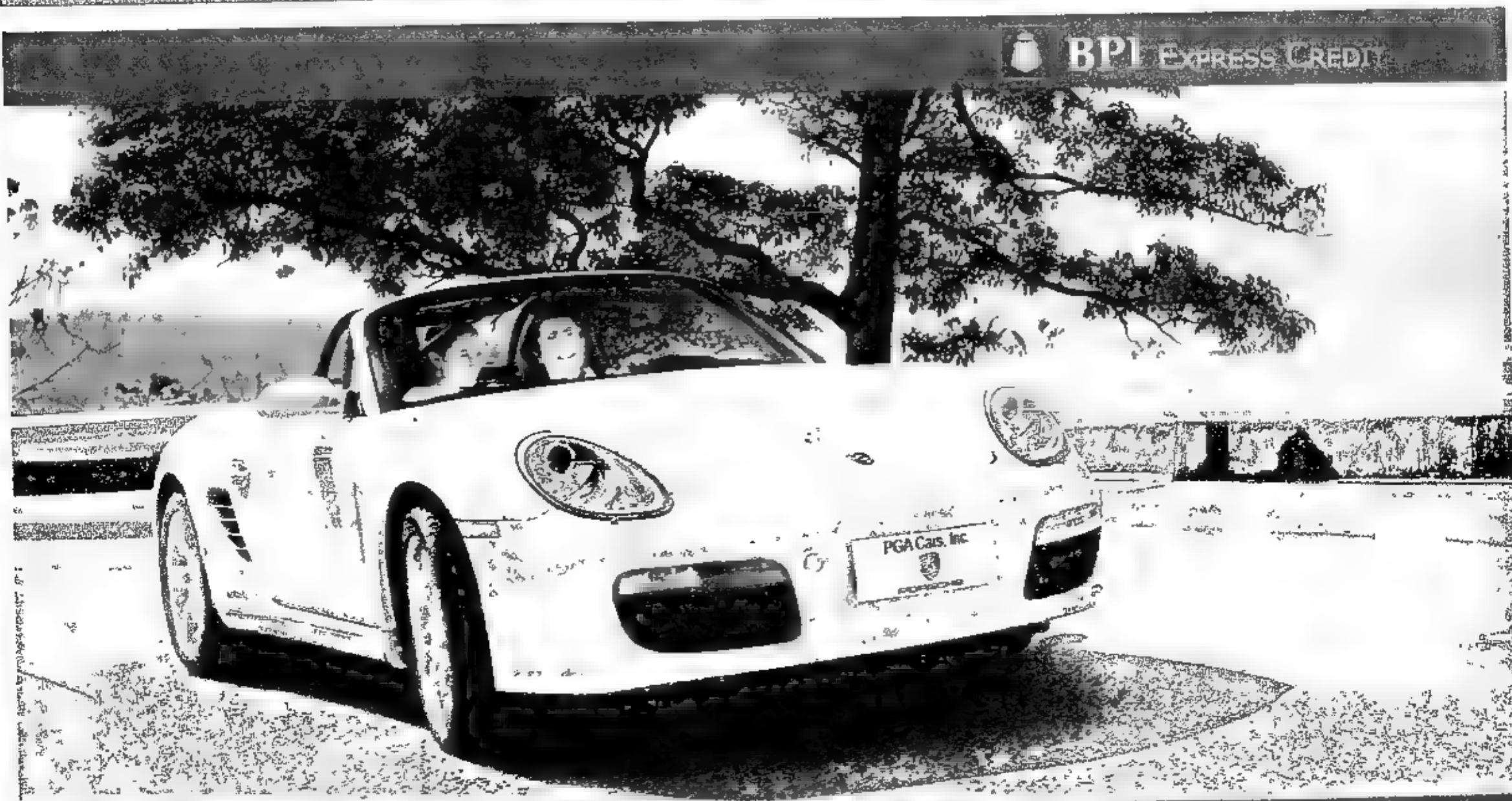
Coming out

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is back in Super! page E1

Why Mich Dulce
suddenly disappeared from the Big Brother House page E1

Polo Ravales
takes it off for Super! page E1

The new State
of Boracay page E1



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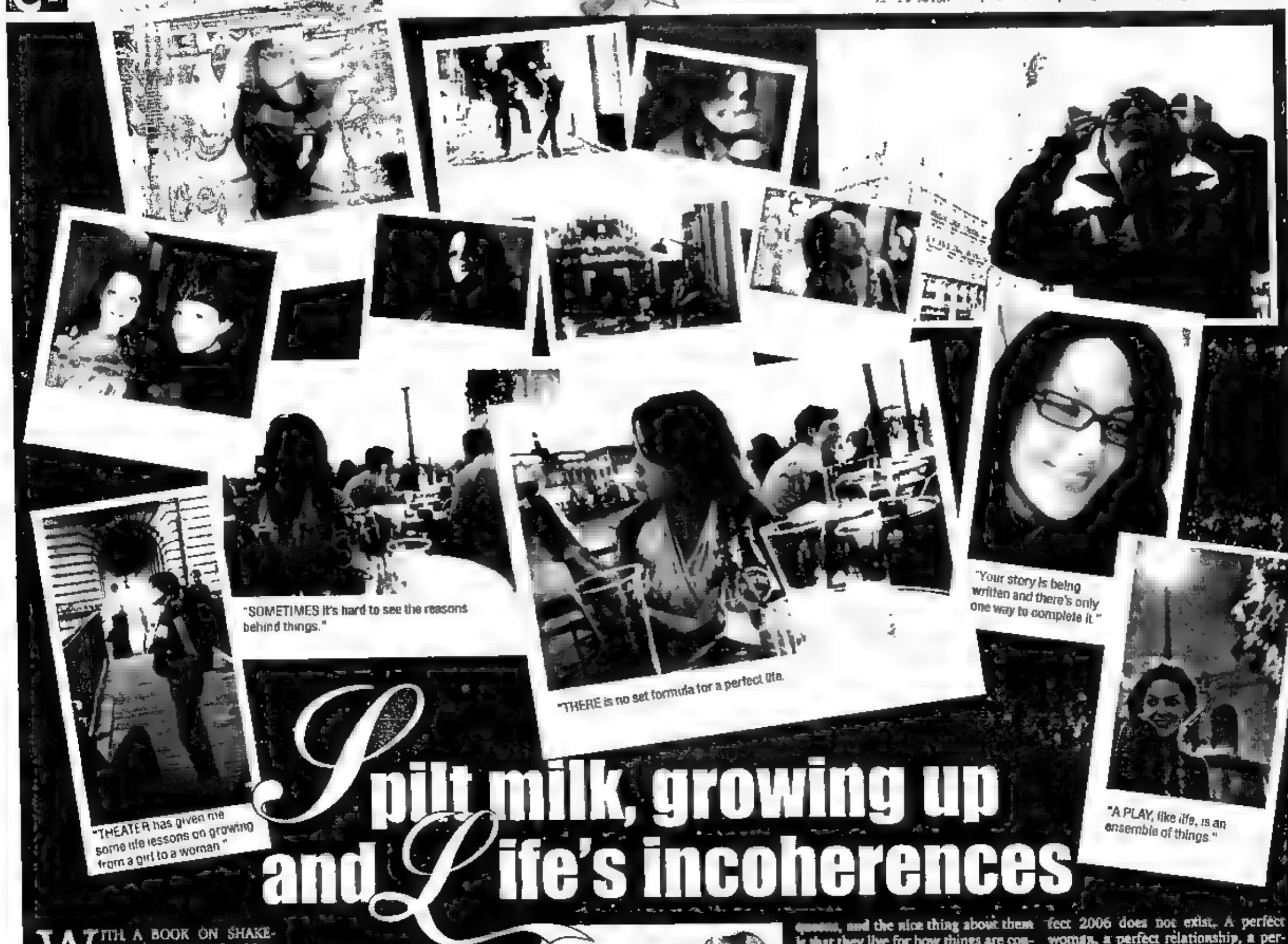
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Spilt milk, growing up and Life's incoherences

WITH A BOOK ON SHAKESPEARE'S Measure for Measure in one hand and a large cup of steamed hazelnut milk in the other, I couldn't do better than hold down paper towels on the floor with my winter boots hoping desperately that they would absorb the milk I spilled on the classroom carpet.

"Don't be anxious about making black & white definitions—your definition will be wrong." In my Writing and Criticism class, with a professor with a background in Theater Arts, we revised the logistics on the makings of an excellent term paper.

Still quietly stomping on the floor with the towels, I jotted down notes but my mind that day was thinking faster than my professor's pace of speech (to do this on a regular basis would be a challenge!).

Silently wondering what was going to happen to the carpet stain, I wrote down what he said. "Don't make premature incoherencies—on oppositions—there are incoherencies but the point is you need to be precise as to when and how you will use them to support your main argument."

Reasons

And I thought, isn't that what makes life worth living?

Incoherencies are like stories in our lives that happened and we find that they don't seem to make sense at all. These stories that could be the makings of a great song and stories which could end up in a fantastic film—if only all the scenes in it conspired to create something whole and we could right away grasp the reasons that they needed to happen. Too many times in the interesting conversations on life people fail to make sense of things—some become impatient and decide on premature conclusions to end the misery of not knowing what is coming next, while others patiently wait from scene to scene, eager about not quite understanding how the story will end. For example, somewhere in the middle of being a girl and becoming a woman is a whole new place I had never been before. Everytime you're in some place new, you don't always know how to deal, you don't always know what to do in situations. Whether it be in receiving a first good paycheck, a new apartment,

a real emotion, true love or one real love that may last years. Now that I'm nearing 21, it feels strange that there are things I used to do that don't feel so right anymore—all of a sudden. There is a saying in the way I played the day the marks I choose to use, the looks I wear, the way I wear my hair, the shoes I walk in, the joys and pains I open myself up to and even in the risks I am willing to take. Sometimes I think that maybe it is a passing phase—just to one day silently realize I might much rather leave the Mickey Mouse lingerie behind, etc. If the opportunity arises, I would find myself returning to that, which I once loved dearly and unquestioningly make the choice to stay.

Growing up

"B & W definitions will be wrong." Transitioning from this girl, babyfat phase to walking into chill Brazil womanhood is definitely a scary thought. I was having a conversation with a friend as we transferred from one campus building to another and she mentioned that she finds Paris is making her grow up fast. I wasn't exactly sure what she meant but I knew it struck a chord because before I knew it, I was building a mental memory wall of all my defining, growing-up moments in the past three years (some of which are freeze-framed in past incidents). All the clicking-clacking of our heels somehow placed me in a space and all I could do was float in awe thinking of how things managed to evolve and wondering how in the world I was supposed to piece all the separate fragments together to get out of Neverland for a little while and make sense of the changes between life as a girl and tucking towards becoming a woman. In relating to the idea of figuring out where certain ambiguous stories in our lives are supposed to lead us to, my friend reassured me (and herself, too) that there is no set formula for a perfect life. For all who aren't rocket scientists, we can never really put things under the sun, then philosophy and be 100 percent sure it will result in that one thing we want to happen. Just as 2005 ended and it brought unexpected relief as the year was just a short, yet-to-be-extreme ride filled with the inevitable ups and downs. For the ups (along with other college students around the world), sophomore



more year ended and I launched into junior year, I began taking more and more control of my finances and finally succeeded in learning enough to have them fully summed over to me. During the summer I joined the Beauty and the Beast Manila cast for 3 months working in the musical from Disney. I recorded tracks for my first 'silence release' and rejoiced with the rest of the Saturday Super gang for the success of that year's Artist's Fair, which happily benefited the Make-A-Wish Foundation and Handz-On Manila. It was a great, productive year. But of course, to balance things out, there were some painful downs that consisted of melancholic misery... hormonal changes, choices made without full conviction, friends who have graduated and moved away to launch the next chapter in their lives, and for you there were, for some, lost relationships, and tired hearts currently驻ing somewhere in Taguig, on vacation.

Life onstage

Theater has given me many life lessons on growing from a girl to a woman. When I first started in theater five years ago, I learned the basics of theater, what you eat before determining what you see afterwards. A play, like life, is an ensemble of things, there is no quantifiable logic (and for playwrights I guess this is also what makes it difficult to write): People come in and out, just as they do in life, and they need to do in order to build the scenes. But no matter what happens, you have to keep at it, you have to continue and the show must go on. I realized last year that the point of theater really is to reduce the invisible into visibility—it makes visible to us what is not seen, all within a structure that works like clockwork. When I think of you do things for one reason at a time, and those reasons may make sense to you now and not later, or may not make sense now but will in the future. We all know drama brings and

questions, and the nice thing about them is that they live for how things are constantly moving and stick up the experience. Change is theatrical in that it can make clear the purpose of things that came before—the worth of decisions you needed to make, the marks people left who came and went, work that was finished that you received recognition for, why things happened the way they did. But sometimes it's hard to see the reasons behind things, and it could be hell to have to be a believer of fate, yet not be able to avoid dwelling on the possibilities of losing something to time, ego, and passivity. Yup, rushing through life and growing up too fast is like running all the time until you fall apart. And falling apart means you need to pick up the pieces, and sometimes it takes time to see if all the pieces fit back together. Mama Lai (Lea Salonga who I love and respect and adore) gave me one of the best pieces of advice and was this: In playing a role, you don't constantly think of the ending of the story.

Change

You just concentrate on the work at hand. You need to go about it scene by scene, one moment to the next, otherwise you will be distracted, if not entirely overwhelmed by the big picture. At one point or another, we all find ourselves at a crossroads where we realize that we are shedding skin just as a city would, as seasons change and things evolve more quickly than we'd wish. For me, because in growing up so many feelings are new, but very, very real, I sometimes find myself intimidated by how much there is we can do. In anything really—writing a paper, in acting for a play, in trying to decide which part of the child in you you want to keep, in putting something on hold, in jumping into something and taking the bull by its horns... I know now that when you do something, the choice has to be yours, because you understand what you're doing it for, you have a set argument and goal to work towards, and because you mean it when you say and do it. Whether or not you know exactly what will come out of the story, this is the only way you could hope to whatever comes next, and the only way is, in real Madonna fashion, take a bow and be true to yourself.

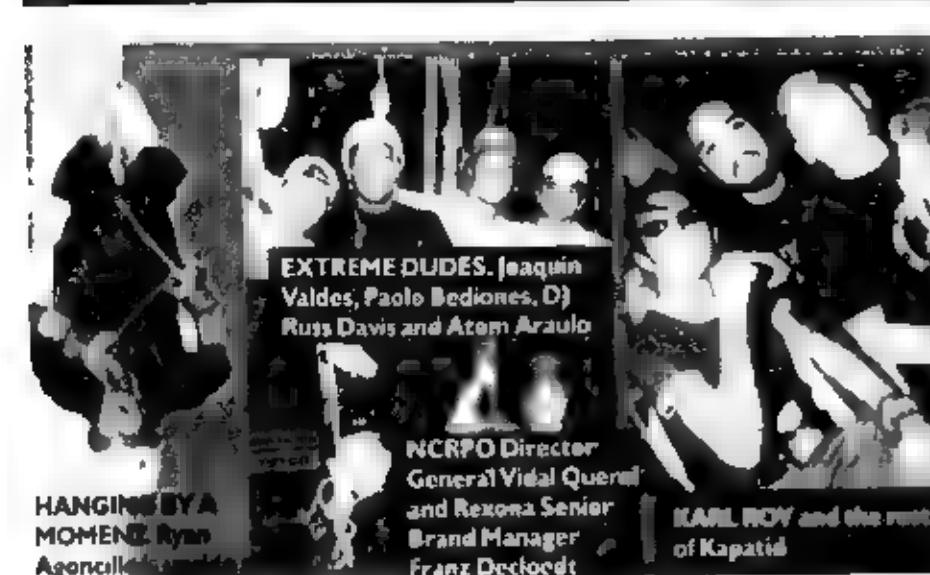
A perfect paper doesn't exist. A per-

fect 2006 does not exist. A perfect woman, a perfect relationship, a perfect performance, and a perfect production do not exist. However (and this one I learned in class), we can all be more precise, and we can all avoid repeating our faults, or summarizing a premature plot. Your story is being written and there's only one way to complete it, and that's to give it some faith and some time. One of my mentors warned me in the beginning: "In theater, you can be rejected. You can have a bad show tonight. You can have a fantastic show tomorrow." Nothing is certain—even in the world that changes faster than you can blink, you still cannot cry over spilt milk, nor instantly sort out incoherencies, but you can definitely make choices to be happy even when there is the stupid temptation to stay stagnant and not make any choice at all. Somewhere in between the bitterness of closure and the excitement and hope of ambiguity, there are certain questions that only time will be able to answer. Then again, you never know—certain stories made within the big picture may not need an ending, but it will always serve a particular purpose.

No accident

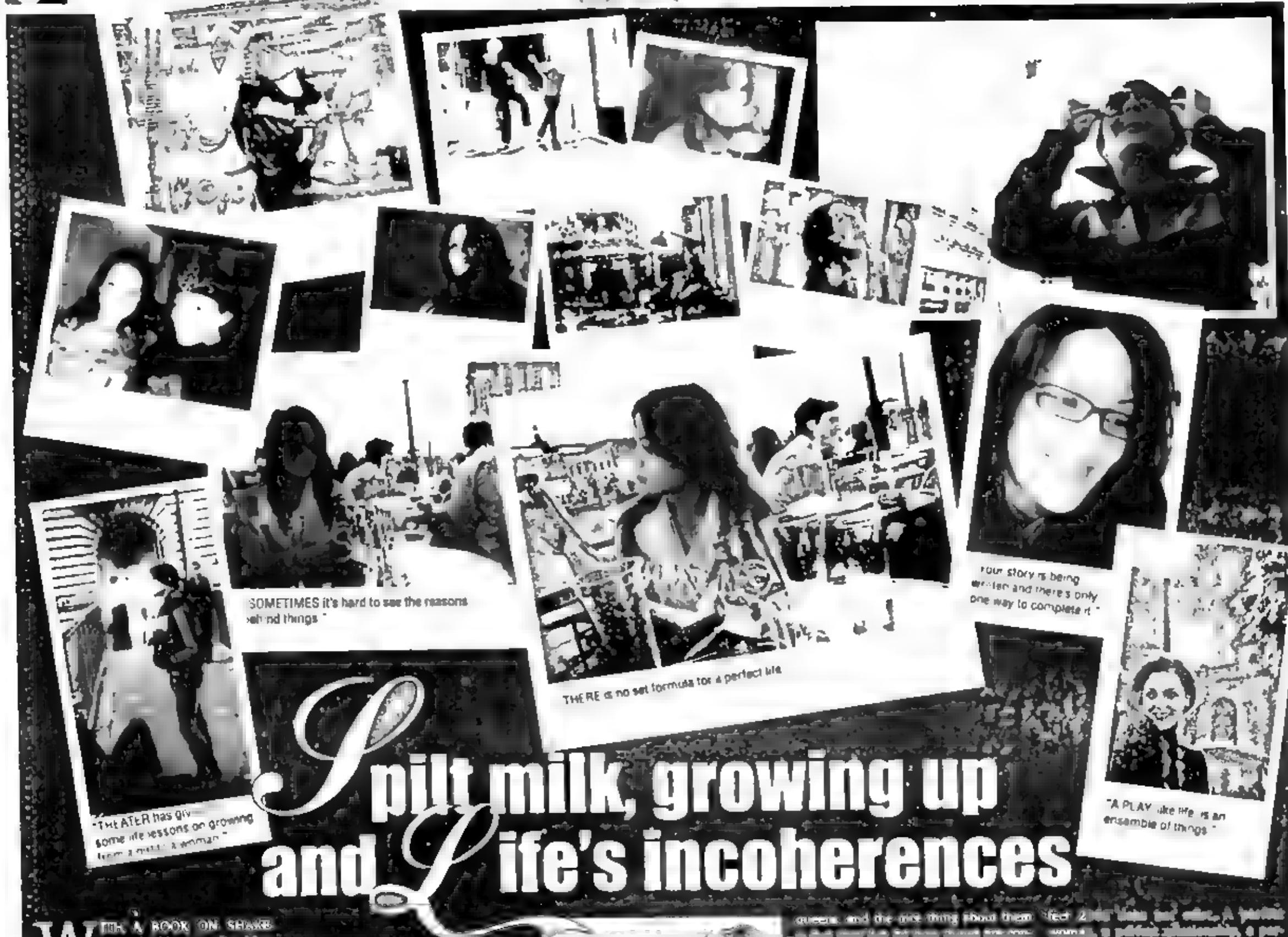
Knowing beforehand that because you learn to love yourself, and because you learn to love who or what the world has in store for you, that you keep doing it and continue on with each scene so that one day you can just touch a turning point! Tomorrow's performance will be better because you bring what you take from your last show.

Shakespeare says after all, that all the world's a stage. And all the world's a classroom where there are different other flavors of milk just waiting to be spilled on the carpet. But even that's no accident—in the end, if you do finally reach the end, those are the encore moments, the incoherencies, that will hopefully come together through time to support and to give worth to those things you fought and lived for. All the things that don't seem to connect now can still come together to make clear analogies in our lives. In other words, one day you will be a kick-ass, rock-ready story that just HAS to be told and remembered over, and over again.



HANGING BY A MOMENT. Ryan Agoncillo





spilt milk, growing up and life's incoherences

WITH A BOOK ON SHAKESPEARE'S Measure for Measure in one hand and a large cup of steamed hazelnut milk in the other, I couldn't do better than hold damp paper towels on the floor with my winter boots hoping desperately that they would absorb the milk I spilled on the

"Don't be anxious about visiting black & white dentists—your dental care will be wrong." In my *Whiting and Children* class, with a professor with a background in Theater Arts, we worked this emphasis on the readings of assignments more greatly.

just quickly jumping on the floor with the words, I just don't care but my mind that day was thinking faster than my professor's pace of speech (he is like on a regular book (that is a distraction)).

And I thought, Is this what it's like to be worth living? I mean, I'm not the type of person who's always been successful in my life, but I've always had the desire to make things at least a little better. I have some choices that could lead me to success with great things and greater wealth, but I would end up from impossible situations and difficult choices. It is encouraged to create something new, which you can control, rather than trying to follow others that they made and go through the same kind of challenges as the people before you. The money itself is the most important thing because we like people but we also know of the consequences because important and valuable are personal care considerations to end the entirety of not impacting what's coming next, while others (probably) walk from another to scene, eager about not quite understanding how the story will end. For example, somewhere in the middle of finding a job and becoming a woman in a whole new place I had never been to before. Everytime you're in some place new, you don't always know how to deal, you don't always know what to do in situations. Whether it be in receiving a first good paycheck, a new apartment,

a real situation, true love or the real love that may last years. Now that I'm nearing 21, it feels strange that there are things I used to do that don't feel so right anymore all of a sudden. There is a change in the way I spend my day, the words I choose to use, the books I read, the way I wear my hair, the shoes I walk in, the joys and pains I open myself up to and even in the risks I am willing to take. Sometimes I think that maybe it is a passing phase—just to one day slowly realize I might much rather have the Harry Potter books behind me. If the opportunity arises, I would find myself running to that, which I once loved dearly and unquestioningly, giving the chains to step

Growing up
• B & W students will be voting.
Voting along from the right, they
have a strong bias and tend to be
less liberal. In October's mayoral election, I was
having a conversation with a friend at my
residence from one campus building to
another and she mentioned that she feels
that it is making her grow up fast. I wasn't
nearly sure what she meant but I knew it
wasn't a good memory before I knew it. I
was having a normal memory until all
my childhood growth was apparent in the
past three years because of which are
now apparent in my writing. All the
memories of our basic principles
that we do it wrong and we could do
our best in our thinking about things
we need to make our world better
in the world I was supposed to play off
the system because I decided to go
out of Novakid for a little while and
make sense of the changes between life as
a girl and having enough money to
survive. In addition to the place of Novakid
where certain principles are still in
our lives and supposed to lead us to, my
friend mentioned the Good House, with
which there is no one formula for a perfect
life. For me who never makes mistakes, it
can never truly put things under the 'Good'
label completely and be 100 percent true.
It will never be a place thing we want to
believe. Just as 2005 ended and it
brought unexpected relief as the year was
just so darling, peace-like movements
like this with the inevitable ups and
downs. For the ups along with other and
large students around the world, enjoy

the way that we have placed ourselves
mostly wrong, and took up the important
and difficult to discern in this life,
and after the purpose of things that
most behove us, work of decisions
we needed to make, the most people
let other men and women, work that was
easier than you started accepting.
For, why things happened the way they
did. But sometimes it's hard to see the
answers behind them, and it would be
well to look at least billions of lies, you
can't give an avoid deciding on the
possibility of living according to
time, age, and growth. Why, nothing
through life and growing up we don't
like moving all the time until you die
soon. And falling apart means you need
to pick up the pieces, and sometimes it
takes time to see if all the pieces fit back
together. When I (as children who I
love and respect and others) grew one
out of the best pieces of broken and two
other in picking a side, you didn't even
know what the ending of the story
was.

The accident. . . .

Waiting outside the school, I always kept quiet and never let him to know who or what the first year he was for you, that you may always feel familiar go with me, and that one day you can just come home point! Tomorrow's perhaps will be better because I'm going where you take off from me.

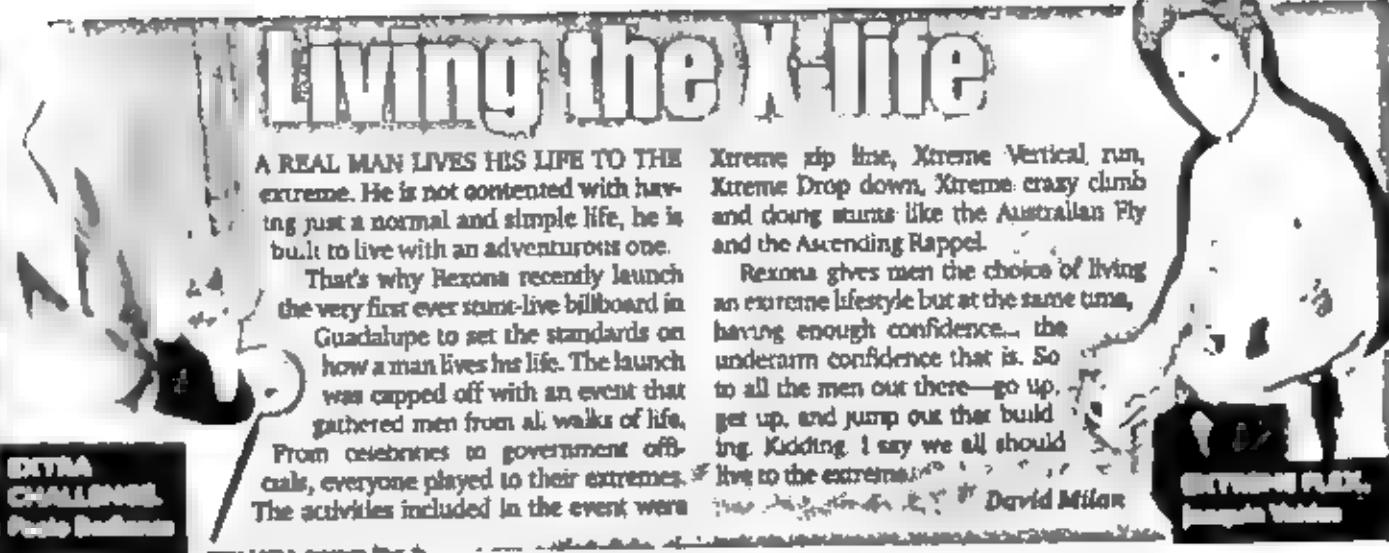
It's been a long time since we last spoke, and we still have a lot to catch up on. If you're finally here, and that's the last time you'll ever leave, then I'll finally stop writing through this diary and we give birth to those things you brought and loved for. All the things you don't seem to notice when we sit down together to make the memories in our lives. In other words, one day you will be a mother, and every day that John HALE is to be with me I'll be more and more, and over again.



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HANGING BY A MOMENT, Ryan



Living the X-life

A REAL MAN LIVES HIS LIFE TO THE extreme. He is not contented with having just a normal and simple life, he is built to live with an adventurous one.

That's why Rexona recently launched the very first ever stunt-live billboard in Guadalupe to set the standards on how a man lives his life. The launch was capped off with an event that gathered men from all walks of life. From celebrities to government officials, everyone played to their extremes. The activities included in the event were

Xtreme zip line, Xtreme Vertical run, Xtreme Drop down, Xtreme crazy climb and doing stunts like the Australian Fly and the Ascending Happel.

Rexona gives men the choice of living an extreme lifestyle but at the same time, having enough confidence—the underarm confidence that is. So to all the men out there—go up, get up, and jump out that building. Kidding. I say we all should live to the extreme.

Strum and Bass

By Gino de la Paz

As The Little Willies, Norah Jones and her pals manage to sound a little less melancholy and, like, a bit more fun



THREE OR FOUR YEARS ago, it seemed like I couldn't spaz out at any Starbucks without hearing Norah Jones' slow-burning, baby-making music in the background. Or worse, hearing latte-loving chicks rave

about Norah Jones' slow-burning, baby-making music in the background. My brothers, all together now, "Zzzzz..."

Millions of pairs of eardrums had an opposing view, however, snapping up the Grammy winner's 2002 debut

"Come Away With Me" and its follow up, "Feels Like Home," by the truckload. But, like, I wasn't impressed. To me she was still Snorah Jones.

On the other hand, as a self-confessed audiophile, I've made it my mission to expand and evolve my already eclectic taste in music. And if that kind of education meant listening to a Norah Jones side project, then bring it the hell on.

The self-titled debut by The Little Willies—the group formed by Norah along with her pals Lee Alexander (bass), Jim Campilongo (electric guitar), Richard Julian (guitar, vocals) and Dan Reiser (drums)—is sophisticated Americana with a slight Lower East Side vibe. The New York band grew up tapping their feet to the likes of Hank Williams, Townes Van Zandt, and Willie Nelson. (To those who, like me, only learned to read and write in the 80s and/or 90s, much less understand music, go ahead and Google away.)

A loose mix of covers and originals, the thirteen tracks on the CD borrow elements from blues, classic rock, and

country. Now if the "C" word turned you off, don't let it. This is far, far away from Dixie Chicks territory. "Streets of Baltimore" is reminiscent of your grandpa's Don Henley records (yes, records) while the last track, "Lou Reed," is pure cowtippin' fun. "Roll On" is bluesy without sounding scarily earthy and all in all, this first effort would make an interesting soundtrack to a slightly more serious roadtrip. By "serious," I mean adult.

If you're looking for rap, house, or new generation rock, you've totally got the wrong address. But if you appreciate classics from Bonnie Raitt or The Eagles, or newer alt-country stuff from Ryan Adams or The Be Good Tanyas, clear space in your iPod for The Little Willies. It may take a while to get into the classy honky-tonk patina of their guitar twang and Western swing, but trust me, the introduction will make you cultured way beyond your years.

The debut CD by The Little Willies drops on March 6. From EMI Music Philippines.

ANLENE Bone

Expert, in global partnership with General Electric, the worldwide leader in bone scan machine technology, is at the forefront in educating consumers on bone health and osteoporosis by providing FREE bone health check nationwide.

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Stronger Bones, Fuller Lives!

Adoracion Rosario All-around Mom, 55 years old

Sa bahay, kahit trabaho ng lalaki kaya kong gawin. Eight years na kasi akong uminom ng Anlene. Would you believe that at this age, umaakyat pa ako ng 15-foot water tank? Ako din ang nagpipintura ng aming bubong at naglilinis ng gutter. Inaakyat ko din ang malunggay tree to harvest its leaves and fruits. Lahat 'yan kaya kong gawin dahil before I reached my golden age, uminom na ako ng Anlene Active. At noong 50 years old na ako, I continued my habit by moving to Anlene Gold. At 53, I was proven to have the bones of a 28-year-old. With Anlene, hindi lang ako housewife, I'm a super handywoman!

Grand Prize winner of P100,000

Natividad Remojo Swinging Survivor, 67 years old

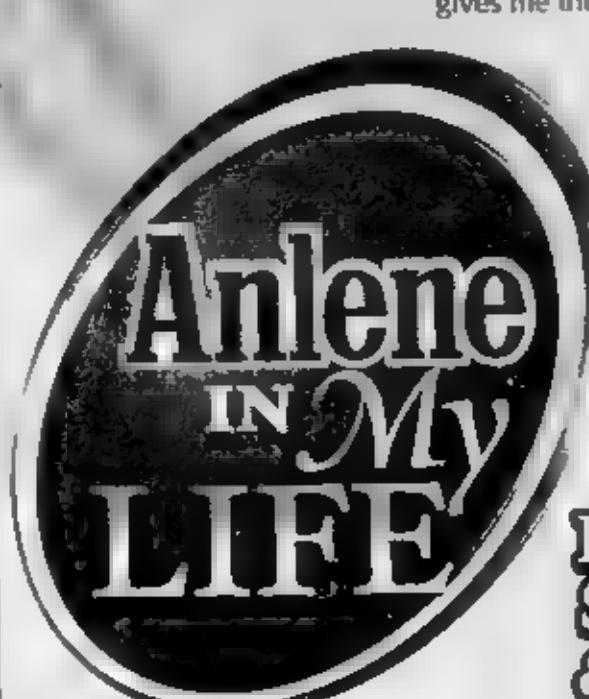
Mahilig akong mag-ballroom dancing. Pero after 42 years ng pagiging teacher, nagkaroon ako ng osteo-arthritis. Hindi curable ang sakit ko. Simplemente paglalakad lang masakit na, lalo na ang pag-akyat ng stairs. I felt so helpless. I can only rely on pain relievers and a quadrant cane para mabawasan ang sakit. Lalo akong nanlumo dahil I had to give up ballroom dancing. Buti na lang na-discover ko ang Anlene Gold. I read that it was effective in preventing bone loss among Asian women. For three years, I made it a habit to drink Anlene Gold. At mula noon, napapansin ko na nababawasan ang sakit. I started to move with ease. Now, kaya ko nang lumakad without using my cane! And of course, I'm back dancing again with my husband. With Anlene in my life, I'm free to do what I love to do.

2nd Prize winner of P30,000 gym membership

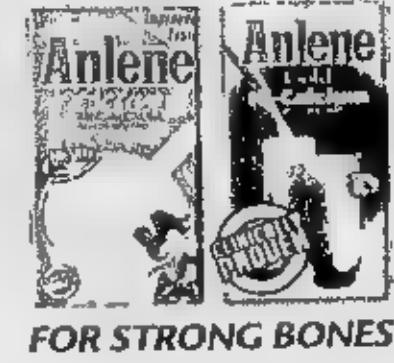
Haydee H. Quijano Fitness SuperMom, 35 years old

Mag-isá kong pinapalaki ang apat kong anak. At ang isa sa kanila ay may cerebral palsy pa. But that's my life and I have come to accept it. It's physically draining kaya I use all the help I can get. I'm really glad na Anlene lang pala ang sagot sa sitwasyon ko. It helps me carry out my duties at home and at work. Dahil hindi lang ako single mom, I'm also an Aerobics instructor. Everyday, I handle 3 sessions of Aerobics and weight-training exercise for my gym class. Pagdating ko sa bahay, I have to do household chores and attend to my kids. Anlene gives me the energy to do all. Talagang super mom ako with Anlene!

3rd Prize winner of P10,000 sports package and P7,000 gym membership



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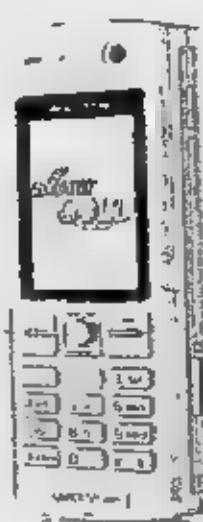
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SUPER! PBB SCOOP

Why Mich Dulce disappeared from the Big Brother House

Tim Yap

A FASHIONISTA HAS LEFT the House. And it's not because she was evicted by the celebrity housemates. "I got anxiety attacks. And they had to take me out kasi I had asthma due to anxiety," Mich Dulce said.

In an exclusive interview at the Philippine Heart Center where Mich was confined, Super! sat down by her hospital bed, surrounded by a couple of friends, her yaya (who she was ready to go bald for in one of the show's challenges) and her doting mom ("Now I know who really cares for my daughter").

"I don't think I can talk yet, I get anxious every time I recall the incident," she told me while holding back her tears. She was given 24 hours to return to the house, but was dissuaded by her doctor from doing so. "My psychologist and doctor told me that it would be too stressful an environment for me to go back to."

Today's telecast of the immensely popular Pinoy Big Brother Celebrity Edition will feature Mich saying goodbye to her housemates and giving them her farewell presents.

What brought the anxiety attacks? "It started when Keanna told me that my crying affected the house too much. So since all of the housemates were my barkada who I care for so much, I didn't want them to feel upset. So I held back on my emotions, kept it all in. I guess this is what led to my outburst. Now I can't even watch the show, because when I do, I get an anxiety attack."

Artist mode

"I am an artist. I write and draw everyday. I listen to music and inside, you can't do any of that. And the effect on me is different. The psychologist said that as an artistic individual, you think with the right side of your brain. And it was easier for me to get affected than the other people kasi artistic ako."

Mich tells me that at first, she was more than excited to come into the Big Brother House. "I thought it was all gonna be fun and I didn't know. And kung alam ko lang na ganito ka-stressful sana hindi na lang ako sumali. It's really, really stressful."

The first two weeks were spent bonding with housemates, at the same time facing challenges like having no toothbrush, deodorant and other stuff that challenged their sense of hygiene. She said that was also able to conquer a lot of her fears, "I held live fish! I hate dogs, but I had to give a dog a bath. But because I had asthma, it made me weak. I was even made to clean carabao sh*t with my bare hands—and I enjoyed every minute of it!"

Women empowerment

She stated her initial purpose. "I wanted to represent the fashion scene, and my charity is the Women's Crisis Center. My band, Death by Tampon is all for women empowerment." She was being her true self all the way, a lover more than a fighter. "Even if I meet you for a day, I'll say, 'I love you!' if I confronted other housemates, it was because I wanted to be real and not backstab anyone." She told me about her

WHY MICH/D3



MICH AND MOM. "Now I know who really cares for my daughter." Mother and daughter bonding at Mich's room at the Philippine Heart Center.

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The Second Coming of Polo Ravales

By Pam Pastor
Photos by Raymund Isaac, all
clothes by Folded and Hung

HE THOUGHT HE'D NEVER
make it back. And perhaps people
thought the same thing.

But good things happen to
good people. And that's what
happened to Polo Ravales.

He took an unexpected break
from show business in 2003 due to
the mismanagement of his career. "I
didn't see it coming," he said. The
sudden departure from an industry
that he loves so dearly brought on
bouts of depression. But Polo chan-
neled his sadness into something
positive. He started working out.
"Dun ko binuhas yung depression
ko," he shared. "I never thought
nakakabalik ako. People were
telling me that it's hard, that very
few people can do it."

But the gods of show business
had other plans for him.

He was off the radar for about a
year when the opportunity to re-
turn came as unexpectedly as his
departure.

One afternoon, on their way to
the mall to watch a movie, Polo
and his friend talked about his fu-
ture. "Pare, ano kayang manggaya-
sa akin? Babalik ba ako ng show
business? Or dapat na akong
mag-work? Ang hirap, parang
nakabaitin ako," Polo told his friend.

His friend spoke prophetically.
"Sa tingin ko may second coming

**He thought he'd
never make it
back. But he was
wrong**

That very same day, Polo ran
into Manny Valera who soon be-
came his manager.

"Ang bilis, it was like God an-
swered my question," Polo said.

The time away from show biz
taught Polo a number of lessons.
"Life in our industry is not perma-
nent. Which is why you should
enjoy the work while it lasts," he
said.

No wonder Polo seems to be so
appreciative these days. And he
shows it by working extra-hard.
Although he knows the life of a
celebrity has its downs ("You lose
your privacy, yung konting mati
mo lumalaki and may mga chisnus
tungkol sayo."), he knows he has
it good. "Our work is relatively
easy. You work, you get paid, you
meet a lot of people, people treat
you well."

When he has time off, Polo
likes seeking refuge in spas where
he enjoys massage treatments. He
also quenches his thirst for speed
by going to Subic for jet-skiing.
"I'm a beach person," he said.
Polo has a lot of things to look

forward to. He's come a long way
from his life as "Ice" during his
TGIs days. Now 23, he feels ready
for more mature roles.

He's part of "Magika," the new
fantasy series that GMA 7 will be
launching on March 20. He's
playing a bida-kontrabida and his
character's love triangle with An-
gel Locsin and Dennis will unfold
in the coming weeks. There are
also plans for new movies.

But right now, Polo is focusing
all his attention on his fashion
show for Folded and Hung which
will be held on Monday. "I've
been working out in preparation
for the show. It's my first major
fashion show."

Polo was recently chosen as the
brand's newest endorser. "It's my
honor. I'm so flattered. I used to
buy clothes from them and I used
to think, 'Ang sarap sigurong
maging endorser ng F&H. I love
their polos,'" he said, seemingly
oblivious to the pun he just made.

That dream is now a reality.
But Polo still has a lot of other
dreams. He wants more challeng-
ing roles. "I want a gay role. Or
maybe play someone mentally re-
tarded," he shared. And, just like
every actor, he's also hoping to
win an acting award.

Why not? Anything can hap-
pen, after all. It is his second com-
ing. And it looks like he's here to
stay.

ppastor@inquirer.com.ph

The thing about fame is that...

You get to do less of what you used to do
and more of what you dreamed of doing.
The thing I love most about what I do is...

I get to play different characters that are

completely opposite of who I am. The work

keeps me challenged all the time.

People might be surprised to know that...

At 5'7", I have extraordinarily big hands

and feet.

The most important thing I've ever

learned is that...

Life is a journey, everything you experi-

ence serves a purpose in your life. You just

have to know how to make the most of

what you have and take positive lessons

from your experiences.

The worst thing that ever happened to me

was that...

During the time I took a rest from show
biz, with the intention of giving myself a
new perspective in terms of my career,
personal life and physical look, I had

moments when I was unsure that show

biz and the people might not accept me

back. And that feeling made me ques-

tion my confidence in myself and the

people who worked with me during

those times.

And what taught this to me was...

That once you have made a decision about

something, you stick to it no matter how

difficult and unsure the outcome will be.

Believing in yourself and in the people who

believe in you will make you stronger, but

your perseverance and your hardwork will

determine the result of your efforts.

The secret to happiness is...

To appreciate all the blessings that come

your way and share them to others.

My best ever outfit consisted of a...

I've always been a casual kind of guy who

loves to have both comfort and style in

anything I wear. F&H low rise jeans fit me

so well and makes me look great and I feel

good about myself, confident at how I

look. A couple of Lacoste and Ralph Lau-

ren Custom Fit shirts, Suunto watch.

My Super Saturday night consists of...

If not working or at home with my family, I

prefer intimate gatherings with close

friends for dinner, chill out in a cozy bar or

going out of town to recharge and relax.

If I was invisible for a day, I would...

Sneak in a Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Cal-

endar Photo Shoot.

The thing that makes me most angry is...

People who are rude, inconsiderate and

lack of respect.

I was the most powerful person on...

I will make sure that everyone gets a fair

share of opportunities.

The best thing about family is that...They'll

stick with you till the end.

When I grow, they'll probably say...

I wish Polo was here.

If money was no option...

I'll travel around the world.

When I retire, I would like...

To enjoy the comforts of life.

The world would be a much better place

If...

Everyone just gets along.

The thing that makes my life worth living

is...

My family, the experiences I go through,

and the special people I meet along the

way.

My greatest hope for the future is...

For Filipinos to live like first world citi-

zens.

The worst thing somebody said

about me was...

When I was starting out in show biz,

someone told me that I was chubby

and that I'd better lose weight or

else I didn't appreciate the comment

then, but now, I completely under-

stand. And now I know that looking

great is only a by-product of staying

healthy.

My favorite moments are when...

I spend quiet time away from the

city.

My most embarrassing moment

was when...

I accidentally ran into a glass door

In a store in Galleria.

I'm saving up for...

All the stuff that a single guy saves

up to in preparation to a new life

when I get hitched.

My biggest independence is...

Setting up my car.

My current state of mind is...

Of great anticipation. I am so

blessed to have been able to come

back in show biz with good projects,

successful shows, tremendous sup-

port from my GMA family. And now,

joining the F&H roster of endorsers,

my mind is working overtime in antici-

pation and excitement as to what new be-

ginnings and opportunities this will bring

me.

If someone would play me in my biopic it

would be...

Jake Gyllenhaal

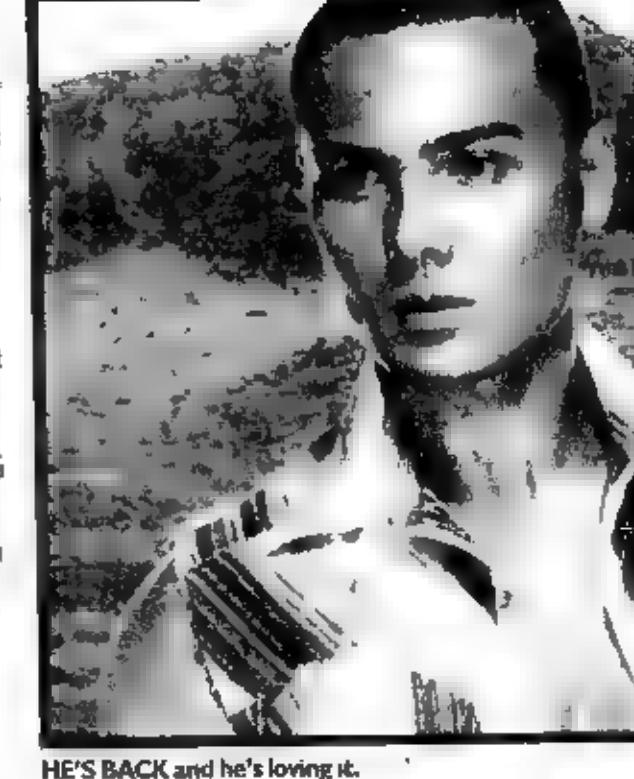
My favorite words are...

Life's how you make it.

I aspire to be... Able to give my best in ev-

erything that I do and bring out the best in

the people around me.



HE'S BACK and he's loving it.



BELIEVING in yourself and in the people who believe in you will make you stronger.



GOODBYE, TGIS. Say hello to a whole new Polo Ravales

Why Mich Dulce disappeared from the Big Brother House

From page D1

close friendship with Keanna, that they vowed to be best friends even after the show is done. "I'll even invite her to my gigs in Saguijo and Sari-Sari—I don't care what other people will think."

Looking back, she didn't get to do her own research about the show. "I really didn't even know what the show was all about—I've never even seen an episode of the first season! I didn't act, and I didn't treat it like a game. I didn't have any strategy." The only strategy she had were the outfit she was planning to wear, hopping from a Cecile Zamora tee to a Team Yap (thanks, Mich!) shirt from her Store for All Seasons on Shaw Boulevard.

The hard part

"In the first day, I was like, 'I have to wear make up!' Then the next day, I treated it like my house. After a while you forget na, except for the robotic cameras. Kasi kanyari, nag-iyakan kayo topos tuhoo haus sound kikmura—it's the robotic camera zooming in on you."

How about the microphone? "We attach it to ourselves first thing when we wake up. There's a penalty if you don't wear your mic. It's grounds for eviction. You can't have secret messages."

What she thought set her apart from the other inhabitants of the house was the fact that she was not really inclined to join showbiz. "I entered as a designer, and I'm going to leave as a designer." Although I heard that she's now getting offers from the network, which she is giving much thought to.

The third week was the start of the hurdles for Mich. "I was having a hard time because I was getting into arguments with a lot of people, who were my friends." When the whole brouhaha over the bald issue came about, she kept crying because she really wanted her nanny to get the P100,000. So even after Rico Robles sacrificed his own hair (because he has been bald before, whereas it took Mich 12 years to grow her curly hair), the money actually went to her taya.

"There were a lot of times that I could not explain myself to them and I didn't feel I had to. But at this game I guess you have to say how you feel so that viewers know." I asked her if there were some things that the other housemates intentionally did just to get attention or pity. "Ako wala, sila ewan ko. I could not tell acting from nonacting, I believed that everything happening was sincere. I really loved everyone, trusted everyone with their friendship."

Sensitive baby

After a while things started to change in the house. From bonding buddies, everything became emotional. "I became the sensitive baby, pero in reality 'di naman ako talaga ganun ka sensitive eh."

"Grobe, it's so hard to explain to people how it was in the house. Each day felt like a week. A week felt like a month." Right smack center of her hospital bed, she would occasionally heave sighs of relief as she recalled her experience in the house. Mich would often smile as she remembered the incidents inside, trying to put a brave and happy facade in front of me, doing her best to put her housemates in the most positive light.

She continued, "We didn't have a sense of time. We would sleep at about 4 a.m. and wake up at around 8 a.m. It was only Bianca (Gonzales) who had a sense of what day it was but Rustom and I would just second guess the time," said Mich when she and her newly ousted housemate would look at the construction nearby and see that the workers were off for lunch break.

Rustom's coming out

Regarding Rustom's coming out to the whole country, she has this to say, "I love, love Rustom! But I didn't know he was gay! I swear I am the queen of the no-gaydars! Maybe because I wanted him for myself," she jokingly admitted while hugging her stuffed toy Pork-chop.

"The reason I joined was to show that this is me. That even if you evict me for who I am, that's fine. The thing is, I put myself in an environment where people can judge."

She is fully aware of the people outside who are quick to jump into hasty conclusions. "Siguro inuisip nila na OA pero para sa akin, yan yung reality."



No way to hide

"When you fight with your bestfriend in the house it's really like fighting with your bestfriend. When you're outside and you hate this person, you can just go to the mall and not see her. Inside, we all take a bath together. There's no way to hide and avoid a fight."

"All the tears I've cried in the span of three weeks are more than all the tears I have cried

in my whole life. As in I just kept crying. PBB is a reality show but the reality of it is magnified. Like in a normal day, you wouldn't have as many fights, cry or pray that much. But everything there is magnified. Everything is a big deal because you are contained."

Well, now that Mich is out of the PBB house, let's all welcome her back into the real world.

"All the tears I've cried in the span of three weeks are more than all the tears I have cried in my life. As in I just kept crying. PBB is a reality show but the reality of it is magnified."

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WELCOME back, Mich!

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- 4. Load purchased via SMS, Convert-a-Load and monthly deposits from SureLoad Subscriptions are disqualifed from this promotion.

5. Reloads in March cannot be counted in April.
6. Reloads in April cannot be counted in May.
7. Subscribers can accumulate the P400 reload from any combination of Regular Call Cards, Xpress load, 24/7 Call & Text Unlimited, 24/7 Text Unlimited, 24/7 Text Unlimited Lite, Daylite Call and Text Unlimited, IDD Top 10 call cards and Regular e-PINs only.
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See posters for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0953 Series of 2006.

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3

I am the son of this Beach

Text and photos
by Tim Yap

JUST WHEN you've seen, heard and done it all in "The Bo-r-a," (think The O.C.) along comes an adventure that makes you do a double take, and realize that there's more than meets the Borac...eye!

Yes, there's the tsubiba, aka The Peris Wheel, which looks more like a Fairies Wheel. I personally like it (not because I'm a fairy), because it adds a certain surreal touch to the tropical landscape. There are new spots to explore, too. Did you know that there's this interesting bat cave on Caticlan? That you can

LAM/E3

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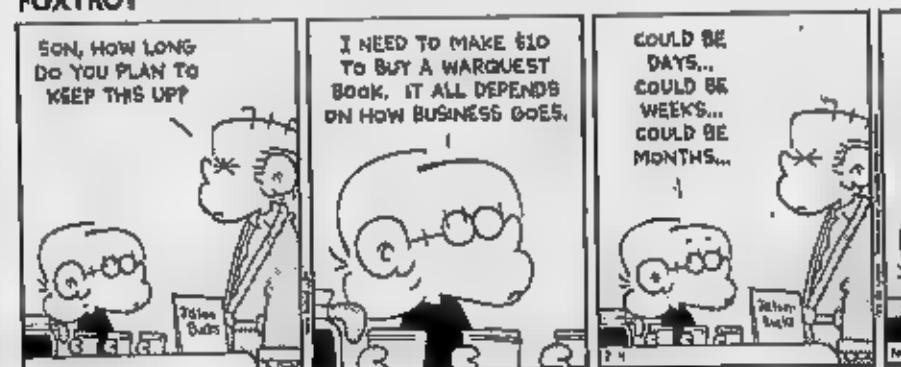
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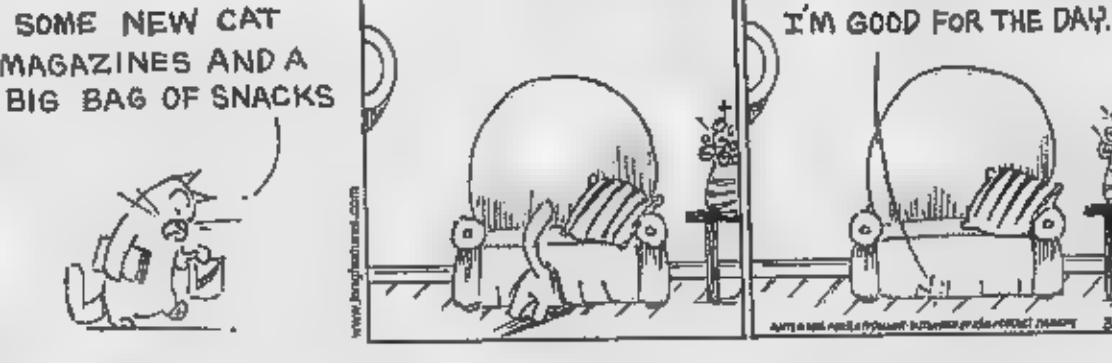


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HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're highly independent. You can work alone if you need to. (Many of you are actually shy.) You have a fine mind and excellent powers of concentration. You enjoy doing good work, you also appreciate when others admire what you do. The year ahead is beautifully social! Expect pleasant, fun times. Partnerships and close friendships are particularly blessed.

Birthday of Miriam Makeba, singer; Patricia Heaton, actress; Landon Donovan, US soccer player.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Your research abilities today are amazing! Dig deep for any answers that you're looking for. Avoid power struggles with the government and large institutions.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) You might encounter somebody who is very forceful today. You'll have to defend yourself. Don't do anything underhanded; keep everything aboveboard.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) Your ability to see beneath things today lets you discover secrets about others. This same ability beautifully enhances any research you have to do.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) You read a lot of newspapers; you're also a history buff. This makes you interested in politics. Nevertheless, don't force your opinions on others today, especially when talking to friends or groups.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) You can't help being obsessed with some kind of idea today, perhaps related to politics, religion or philosophy. That's OK. Just don't try to make everybody else agree with you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) You might sound like a stuck record when talking to others today. That's because you're obsessed about something! Don't get hung up on a particular detail today. Lighten up.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) Your ability to discover hidden things can serve you well at work today. Nevertheless, don't become so obsessed that you forget everything else. Strive to keep a balanced point of view.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) Be gentle with children. Avoid power struggles with romantic interests or young people. It's too easy to get off track and become obsessed about something today. (Not good.)

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Be gentle in your discussions with family members today. Don't try to win an argument. Instead, use this intense energy to clean up laundry and garbage areas.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) You might be a victim of compulsive thinking today. You can't get an idea, or a song, or a person out of your mind. Relax. This will be gone in 48 hours. (Thankfully.)

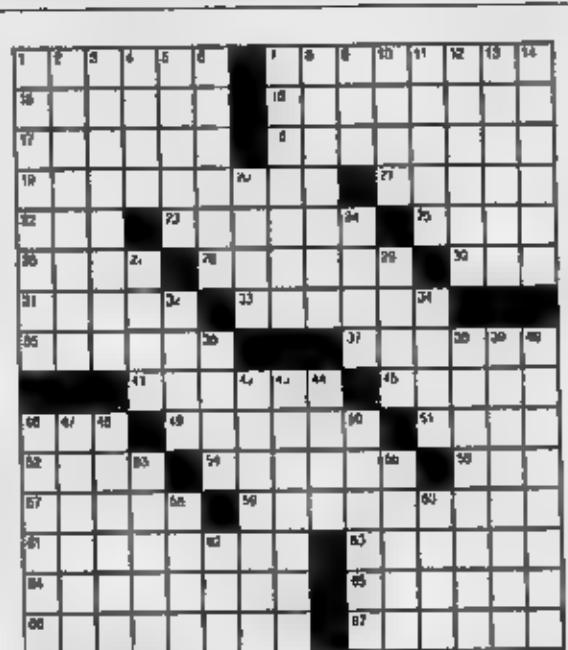
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) Watch your spending habits today. You might part with money because you can't resist something. Try to be level-headed about financial matters. Guard against obsessive impulses.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) People seem to be intent on winning arguments or forcing others to agree with them today. You might fall into this as well! Just cool your jets. (Nobody likes "pushy.")

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- Draw together lightly
- Condenses
- Moralizing discourse
- Most clamorous
- Madison or Fifth
- Be the most influential
- Enduring
- Binding devices
- Boxer Leila
- Dark red gem
- Abominable snowman
- New walkers
- Indian instruments
- Lair
- Versity
- Elder
- Trouser leg measurement
- Artful deceptions
- Fleshy-lipped fish
- Tool for evening
- Easter treat
- Children of Uranus
- Turkish breed?
- Poet Teasdale
- Doctor, slangily
- Part of DJIA
- Early spring bloomers
- Not intolerable
- Gnu or nigel
- Windup
- Do-over litigators
- Engaged in swordplay
- Establishes a will's validity
- Quenches
- DOWN
- New Deli flatbread
- Miss Lonelyhearts' advisees
- Retired professor's title



By Matthew Higgins

Concord, NH

3/4/06

Friday's Puzzle Solved

| | | |
|--------------|----------|--------|
| TIPPER | LAYS | ALB |
| INSANE | JRAL | SUE |
| SKRTS | AIRE | TAG |
| TRIED | DAND | TRUE |
| ASGOODAS | GHOST | |
| SCOOPER | IDEA | |
| HANKY | ONESWORD | |
| EINE | POTSBY | KAY |
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3/4/06

Friday's Puzzle Solved

By Matthew Higgins

Concord, NH

3/4/06

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Friday's Puzzle Solved

By Matthew Higgins

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SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 2000



I am the son of this beach

From page E1

have lunch in a river with your feet on the water, just 15 minutes from the airport?

Does one think that some resort in Boracay has changed to newest resort developments on all sides of the island? You wanna try great Greek food in D'Mall?

Malay Mayor, the Hon. Ceciron Cawaling—I call him Mayor Don—became my personal escort and tour guide to these new discoveries, and more. I've been coming to Boracay since I had black hair—only now did I explore these hotspots away from the so-called Makati Beach. Now I can definitely tell myself that I am a true son of this beach.

Let me spell it out for you.

B—is for Boracay Terraces Resort's new wing called Balay Apartelle. Right at the tip of Station 1, these sprawling loungey apartments spell luxury and comfort away from it all. The suites, owned by Bora godfather Steve Tajanlangit has its own kitchen and dining room, perfect for entertaining guests in your home away from home.

O—is for Oh-So-Relaxing secret spot called Palomaria—A Surfer's Kitchen owned by formerly Manila-based architect and designer team of Ian and Leah Bautista. "When you need a break from the party crowds on White Beach, take a tricycle from D'Mall and tell them to take you to Palomar, on Bulabog." Twenty minutes away from the beach is this secret spot called Palomaria, a small chillax spot built around a Palomaria tree. Kite surfers, hip locals-in-the-know and the occasional wayward tripper all gravitate to

1AM/E4



PHILIPPINE STAR
LIVE YOUR DREAMS



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1 out of 3
children
afflicted by
the traitor disease
will die.



Every smile, every little move he makes brings you joy. You love him and protect him from harm. Do you know he could be in danger right now?

There is a traitor disease that afflicts children, even those aged 2 years and under. It kills 1 in 3 babies every year. This traitor is called Invasive Pneumococcal Disease or IPD.

It can lead to Bacterial Meningitis, a kind of IPD that infects the covering of the brain and spinal cord and could kill your child in two days. If your child does survive the next two days, don't celebrate—severe complications can include massive brain damage leading to mental retardation, seizures and paralysis—conditions worse than death.

According to a study conducted by Dr Rose Capeding et al of the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM), 90% of IPD's occurrences were seen among children below 5 years old, 78% were less than 2 years of age. Almost all Invasive pneumococcal diseases were seen in children below one year of age. 1 out of 3 of those afflicted died.

The only real solution to IPD is prevention. Mercifully, you can protect your child because an IPD vaccine is now available. For effective protection against this killer illness, immunize your baby at an early age.

Ask your pediatrician about the IPD vaccine. Choose prevention before it's too late.

ipd
invasive pneumococcal disease

Ask your doctor
about it.

() Yes, I want to know more about IPDA Please send me more information.

Name: _____
Address: _____
Contact No.: _____

Mindanao cut and fax to 8846780 or send to Pharma Division, Wyeth Philippines, Inc., 2236 Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City 1200

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If shopping is your obsession and traveling your passion, then you're in for a wonderful surprise. The credit card that allows you to keep on going, keep on buying and keep on flying is here—Go! MasterCard. And with summer fast approaching, Go! MasterCard couldn't have arrived at a better time.

Can't resist the gorgeous bikini and cute, colorful flip-flops you've been eyeing for weeks? Just go buy it with your Go! MasterCard. Want to work on your tan in Cebu or Boracay? Go ahead. Charge your Cebu Pacific tickets to the card. And let's not forget your pesakabong for family and friends back home. Your Go! MasterCard can take care of that, too. How about indulging in both buying and flying in Hong Kong? No problem. Just Go!

And it keeps getting better. The more you buy or fly using your Go! MasterCard, the more you buy and fly—for free.

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Earning points has never been this easy. Once you've collected 500 points, you get a Go! Cash gift card loaded with P500. You may use it to buy items from any of the Robinsons Retail Group establishments mentioned for free. But if flying is more your thing than buying, you have the option to charge your Cebu Pacific tickets against the Reward Points that you've already earned. Avail of this offer by simply calling our 24-hour Go! MasterCard Customer Service Hotline at 898-7088 or our domestic toll-free number at 1-800-10-8700755. You may also e-mail us at www.cebuspacificair.com for a complete listing of authorized Cebu Pacific ticket issuers.

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Go! MasterCard lets you keep on going and going and going. With a credit card that goes all out to satisfy



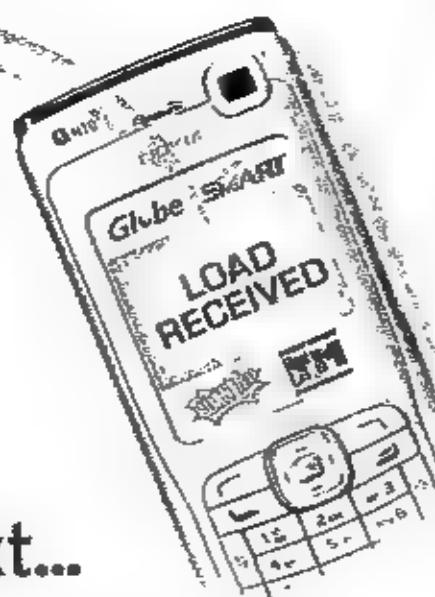
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I am the son of this beach

From page E3

wards thus beach-nik hotspot.

R is for the River, called Nabaoy River, which is 15 minutes from the airport. Think Villa Escudero in Caticlan, where you can get your feet wet having a great meal in the middle of the river; complete with tribal troupe in their bahag best. Dyango heads the Tambulan Group, whose music and dancing serves as perfect accompaniment to a spread of local delicacies that is best enjoyed kamayan style.

A-is Asya—Situated at an unlikely area (near the Police Station on Station 3), this hidden enclave owned by Choy Cojuangco features Asian-inspired interiors by Bacchus Zulueta. Each room is masterfully designed to Zen perfection, with glass doors opening up to a private garden, spacious bathrooms and Bali-esque decor. Another great escape to check out. A also stands for Asian Spirit, the leisurely way to fly to this island.

C-yana—This new jewel on the culinary front is so popular that if you haven't heard of it, you're so Bora baduy. Owned by now Bora resident Nino Zuñeta, it boasts of great tasting dishes served right away. It has an open kitchen so you see the attention to detail that intends to make you feel like a god or goddess in the Greek Isles. C—also stands for Cafe Ischua, who is proud to be the "first airconditioned bar in Bora." Owned by Ariel and Mimi Abriam, this pink colored bar is fast becoming popular among hot locals who like to cool down. The last C stands for "cave," as in Pangihan Cave, which is in Barangay Poblacion, a five-minute trek from the Malay Municipio—a true blue bat cave, if you care to see one.

A-Arriving in style with the Beach-neys. This proposed new form of transportation will soon be the ride du jour on the island. For a flat fee, you get a pass which allows you to hop on/hop off all the spots from within the island. Thus colorful version of a golf cart can seat 12 at a time, including tall Caucasians and basketball players. The beach-neys—it's a jeepney for the beaches...tourists.

Y is for Yummy! I heard chef Antonio Sanchez of Banza is opening up a new resto at D'Mall. We sampled his Portuguese fare at Banza at Station 3, and I swear, it was one of the most memorable meals I've had of late. Another one is the crab house at Escondido resort, owned by Greg Keyser. They import their crabs from Roxas City, and concoct their own versions of chili, pepper and garlic crab. This hideaway (which is what Escondido means) even has fully furnished rooms with jacuzzis and private huts. But, the Escondido crab takes the cake... And eats it, too!

N-Nina Bustamante of Island Chicken Inasal. Everytime you head over the tsuibo, turn your head to the right and look for the place that is always full. That's Island Chicken Inasal, famous for their what else? Homemade leche flan and the chicken inasal where taste and flavor in my mouth. Kans! their version of the balut is so good.

O-is for the Office of Mayor Cawangang the man in man who is urging tourists to seek out other sides of Boracay. I think he is doing a great job.

W-wow! Wow Philippines, wow Boracay!

For inquiries, please call Richard Flores, Head Malay Tourism Office, (036) 288-7108 or 0917-7454400.



style . urban living .

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Rock Ed Philippines: Focus on Leyte

The mud washed away everything but their chance to begin again so we will come to the center of the city from dark bars with our rock bands & we will stand side by side until we make a bridge of dry land back to a place which promises to hold them safe for each other's children back to a place called Free

-Gang Baday
adopted from Andreas' "Promise"

ROCK ED PHILIPPINES, A VOLUNTEER group that advocates civic-mindedness through the arts is spearheading a concert entitled Rock Ed sa CCP: Para sa Leyte! The concert will be held at sunset (6 p.m.) on Tuesday March 7, 2006 the CCP Main Theater's driveway ramp facing Roxas Boulevard. Planned

in a very short span of time, Rock Ed is overwhelmed at the quick and generous response of the artists who all volunteered to perform for free. This way 100% of the proceeds will go to Leyte.

The line up so far goes as follows: Radioactive Sago Project, Noel Cabangon, Up dharma Down, Juan Pablo Dream, Giniling Festival, Paramita, The Dawn, Sound, Grey Skies Sessions, The Late Isabel, Makatha, Kjwan, Stitches, Jeepney Joyride, Spenglers, Cover Me Quick, Menaya, Bateria, Reggae Rock, Shards of Ice, Reklamo, Virgin Hunters, Cocojam, Formula Juan, Torotot Festival, Sweet Potato, Cynthia Alexander and many many more.



PHOTO BY REM ZAMORA

This concert
has a lot of
heart

(Keep posted for updates on the line up of artists on www.rocked-philippines.org) The list is still growing. A minimum donation of P100 will be asked of you at the gate. The stub comes with a free glass of San Miguel Pale Pilsen. McDonald's is our food support partner for the evening as well.

Rock Ed Philippines is proud

to have succeeded in getting the most unexpected combination of groups to come together to try to address some needs of the Leyte survivors. Imagine the Cultural Center of the Philippines, The Home of NU Rock NU107, Terno Recordings, Dakila-Philippine Collective for Modern Heroism, Preview Magazine, MTV Philippines and Rock Ed Philippines all taking the effort to work together despite differences in styles, visions, and natures of work. That alone is a feat. In any case, this Para sa Leyte consortium makes a statement that "unity

never meant uniformity and diversity never meant discord."

Classical musicians and rock stars, fashion mavens and NGO volunteers, purists and fusion-oriented artists have come together because of compassion for others. Truly they join the voice saying, "No More Excuses, Philippines!"

People will also have opportunities to donate even if they can't watch the concert. You may check the Rock Ed website for more details. www.rocked-philippines.org. To donate you may text 0906-271-7287.

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Agora Youth Awards

Roslyn Chua tops 2006 Agora Youth Awards



**AGORA
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AWARDS**

National Winners



Reynaldo P. Gabunada, Jr.
Ateneo de Manila University



Joseph Alber R. Buddahim
University of the Philippines-Diliman



Ysabella P. Cainglet
University of the Philippines - Visayas



Maria Kris Ann A. Llanes
Ateneo de Manila University



AR B. Polinar
New Era University



Michelle V. Grejaldo
University of the Philippines - Visayas



World-class marketing. World-class mindset. Entrepreneurial spirit. These are some of the enviable attributes that set apart this year's Agora Youth Awards. Indeed, the cream of the crop.

Roslyn Chua is a BS Management Major and minor in Entrepreneurship at the Ateneo de Manila University. A self motivated leader who works best with a professional team. Her openness and willingness to learn is a result of her diverse experience working with people from different culture and backgrounds in both academic and working fields. She is also the President of her own start-up business involved in beverage and manufacturing industry. And she is only 21 years old.

The whole experience leading up to becoming one of the National Finalists for the 2006 Agora Youth Awards was both exciting and challenging for Roslyn, believing that it not only broadened her knowledge but also heightened her passion for marketing.

Reynaldo Gabunada and Kris Ann Llanes, also from Ateneo de Manila University; Albet Buddahim, President of the Philippine Junior Marketing Association from UP Diliman, Michelle Grejaldo and Ysabella Cainglet from UP Visayas and AR Polinar of the New Era University were also declared Agora Youth Awardees for 2006.

Other national finalists include Vivien Betsy Fuentebella of Southville Foreign Colleges, Jocno Naboy of Central Luzon State University, Stephen Pajardo of Mindanao State University - IIT and Nathaniel Sy of Chiang Kai Shek College.

These national finalists were invited to a 2-day training seminar at Unilab Head Office, the topic discussed in the 2-day event were: Personality Development and Presentation Skills presented by Butch and Gwen Albarracin of Center for Pop Music Philippines, Brand Management and Advertising by Jos Ortega of BrandLab, Market Research Overview by Nick Fontanilla of The ACRE, Inc and Strategy Formulation by Edwin Mapanao of Unilab Animal Health.

The Philippine Marketing Association mounted the 2006 Agora Youth Awards to recognize the best and the brightest marketing students today. Started in 1991 and initially called TOMAS-TOSMA or Ten Outstanding Marketing Students and Three Outstanding Students Marketing Association, the Agora Youth Awards has already recognized over 100 outstanding marketing students nationwide.

Inspired by the prestigious Agora Awards that select the best among marketing professionals and academics.

Jemilee Perez, last year valedictorian, is now working with Unilever. Edgar Caper, batch valedictorian in 2003 TOMAS TOSMA, is now the Retail Store Brand Manager of HBC Home of Beauty Exclusives. Diana Aaron, Lawrence Galindez and Gerald Moscardo also work at HBC as brand managers. Last year's winners, Angel Maquilin and Martin Sunaz, now work with Nestle Ice Cream. Other winners are now with big companies like Philip Morris, Unilever, Procter & Gamble and San Miguel Corp to name a few.

The Philippine Marketing Association in cooperation with the Association of Marketing Educators and Philippine Junior Marketing Association, chose the regional winners based on their project involvement, awards and recognition, documents presentation and written case analysis of Univer's dog food brand. The national winners, meanwhile, were judged solely on their marketing strategy presentation on www.yehey.com case last Feb. 25 at the Elks Club. National judges were Emerico de Guzman (PMAP), Tom Bangui (2006 President, Philippine Marketing Association), Donald Lim (www.yehey.com), Jade Tulio (HBC), Jennifer Chan and Cindy Banaria (Nestle Ice Cream). This year's batch is again worthy to be called world-class future marketers.

Association Winners

Ateneo de Manila University

University of the Philippines - Diliman

San Beda College

De La Salle University - Dasmariñas

Marketing Society, Inc. (OPVI)



Warmest greeting to the Philippine Marketing Association as you hold the Annual Agora Youth Awards.

Your organization has played a pivotal role in the unprecedented growth of the Philippine Industry for the past several years. Our consumer's interest in purchasing new and innovative products can, without a doubt, be attributed to the ingenuity of our promising marketing students in positioning their products in the competitive market.

I congratulate the winners of this year's Agora Youth Awards for their remarkable achievements. Let us work hand-in-hand to create a conducive business environment for local and foreign investors. Together, we can truly bolster our already emerging and strengthening economy.

I wish you all the best in your future endeavors.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
President
Republic of the Philippines



Congratulations to the Agora Youth Awardees! The future of the Philippine marketing profession, as the country braces for globalization and moves up to a stringent, challenging world-class standard of excellence.

We honor and applaud you as the finest among your peers, and pray that you will continue to be the epitome of excellence amidst intense competition, as you have proven at this early stage of your development.

We challenge you to be at the forefront of the Philippine Marketing Association's theme, battle cry and advocacy to "Move up to World-class" and demonstrate that the Pinoy marketer has the discipline, drive and most importantly, creativity to compete anywhere.

Kaya Natin!

TOM C. BANGUI, JR.
President
Philippine Marketing Association



JOJO ALERO
VP Youth & Academe
Philippine Marketing Association



It is with great pleasure and elation that we salute this year's winners of the Agora Youth Awards.

I would like to personally relay my sincerest thanks and appreciation to this year's board of judges, entries and sponsors who gave their overwhelming support in making this event a landmark success.

My personal thanks to our speaker, Mr. Menardo "Butch" Jimenez, Jr. who delivered a very inspiring message to the delight of our student finalists, PMA members and our guests, as well.

We thank all the students, parents and the schools they represent. Your participation provided us the inspiration to move on.

I extend my congratulations to all who won. Your achievement has made us all proud.

To all of you, may you continue to inspire others with your Agora Award - a symbol of marketing excellence and a challenge to achieve even more in the future.

Mabuhay!

RUBBY RAMORES
Over-All Chairman
Agora Youth Awards



This year's Search for Agora Youth Awardees was focused on challenging young marketing students to become world-class marketers.

Towards this end, we injected changes to this year's competition. We dared the candidates to come up with innovative ideas. We pressured them to confront competition and turn out something more than the extra-ordinary, something to surprise not just delight the panel.

We challenged them that if the graduates of past years were able to prove their worth as creative, innovative and trend-setting marketers, the weight on their shoulders is far greater because they are considered better equipped than their predecessors. If they were able to make waves, then you are expected to create tsunamis.

Instead of just one case study, we stirred their imagination by giving them two projects. The first case focused on how a new pet food company could carve its own niche in the pet food industry. The second dared them to find ways how www.yehey.com could be a part with current leaders in the E-marker and Internet service providers.

For the first time, we conducted an in-house seminar workshop where various topics were discussed, among others, Strategy Formulation and Application like the Appreciate module. Market Research and Tools by SPSS's Dr. Nick Fontanilla. Presentation Skills and Personality Development were handled by Gwen and Butch Albarracin of the Center for Pop Music Philippines. Their creativity was challenged by Jos Ortega of BrandLab, who discussed "What is your Brand Story?"

Likewise, our candidates joined an educational tour in which they were exposed to the operations of various companies like Nestle Ice Cream, HBC Home of Beauty Exclusives, a homegrown which aims to go global and GMA 7, the premier TV network in Asia.

This year's Agora Youth Awardees emerged from 56 entries from 19 schools all over the country and are now among the elite 10 outstanding graduates who made it to the regional finals and thus, regarded as the "cream of the crop" among young marketers.

Now, they are ready to compete in a flat, borderless and smaller world. They will compete in an absolutely new playing field where a host of multinational and multicultural players fight for success.

There's a phrase in the Bible which state: "To whom much is given, much is expected". Much has been provided for our awardees and much expected from them. To be world-class is your challenge, Kaya ninyo ito! Go and conquer the world!

EDWIN C. MAPANAO
Chairman Search
2006 Agora Youth Awards



Butch Jimenez, whose main advocacy is with the youth shared important lessons to the winners of the Agora youth marketing awards as they plan their careers in marketing. Taking off from the classic book "Positioning" written by Al Ries and Jack Trout, Butch told the students that they have to be the "top of mind" of their bosses, and they must "burn" a positive attribute in the minds of their colleagues in order to succeed.

He focused on two attributes they needed to develop within themselves. The first is discipline, and the second is to execute. Butch shared that the ability to execute is what separates good employees from great employees.

"You can strategize, analyze, and come out with a perfect plan, and that's good. But you'll never be great until you execute the plan," said Butch.

Finally, he told them to focus on their young careers, but to always keep an eye on the country. He told the audience what he taught his team in PLDT as the Leyte tragedy was unfolding, that "though we have a business to run, we first have a country to serve." In which case his Retail Business Group team now ran a fund raising campaign that would meet both goals—beat their target and raise money to help rebuild Leyte.

Board of Judges



THE AGORA YOUTH COMMITTEE

Shown are (from left) Edwin Mapanao, search chair; Richard Añonuevo, project coordinator; Al Viscara, ways and means; Germie de Guia, program; Ruby Ramores, over-all chair; Jojo Alero, vice president for youth and academe and Andrew Que, staging.

Thanks to our Sponsors



Chowking's 'Braveheart' Marketing The Way to a Customer's Heart

BEHIND EVERY SUCCESSFUL COMPANY IS A GREAT marketing story waiting to be told. In the case of Chowking, the story starts the day it was born. As far as traditional Filipino dining experience goes, Rudyard Kipling's classic line, "East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet" still resonates. Filipinos trooped to the corner restaurants in Binondo's Chinatown for a bowl of noodle soup and dimsum; they stopped by the nearest hamburger store for a slice of American life with cheese and fries.

That is, until 1985 when Chowking Food Corp entered the market and did what was once unthinkable: to make East and West meet right at its store.

Pioneering the quick-service (QSR) Oriental restaurant concept, Chowking offered steaming hot and delicious Chinese food served fast food-style by a smiling and friendly crew. Its stores donned bright and dynamic colors usually associated with American diners.

It was an innovation only a company that knows what it stands for, what it can offer, and what it can offer best would take. From its birth, Chowking was already blazing the trail with the bravest of hearts.

"Filipinos take on the greatest risk, but they are also poised to reap the greatest reward," says Chowking's president and CEO Raffy dela Rosa.

Looking at how it has grown over the years, the Chowking story is nothing short of phenomenal. In just five years, Chowking more than tripled its annual sales to P7.2 billion in 2004 from P1.9 billion in end 1999 when the company joined the Jollibee Group of Companies.

Next to Jollibee, Chowking now leads fast food establishments in the store count with 316 Philippines stores as of April 2005. It has also started its aggressive global foray by recently setting up three stores in Indonesia in addition to its eight stores in the United States and four in the United Arab Emirates.

The 'FSC' way

"When we took over Chowking in 2000, we worked on turning the company around. To do this, we had to answer: 'what would make the customer want us?' Dela Rosa says. "The answer ultimately led us to our mission: to delight the customer."

Chowking applied a very simple formula: FSC (where "F" stands for food, "S" for service, and "C" for cleanliness). All aspects of the business—from operations to support services—are measured by these three standards. For its customers to know when Chowking truly stands for, the company relied heavily on marketing.

"Everything we did—from the boardroom to the stores, from the commissary to the kitchen, and from the crew to the table—bore the touch of marketing. All our actions were premised on what will make the customer happy," Dela Rosa says.

What made Chowking a marketing success was the involvement of everyone in the company—from the CEO to the chefs, to the commissary, down to the stores. Everybody carries the "brand Chowking"—from the culture to the smile.

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2. An entry is composed of one (1) empty pack of any Thunderbird Power Feeds, or one (1) empty box of Bexan XP, or two (2) blister packs of Thunderbird Vermigo, or four (4) foil packs of Thunderbird Baxidil, Vetricin Gold Capsule, and attach a piece of paper with your name, birthday, address, phone no., signature and name of store. Enclosed in a legal size envelope.

3. Entries can be dropped in drop boxes at designated stores within your area, or you may also send your entries to:

Thunderbird Power Trio Promo II
c/o Sarimanok Feeds Company, Inc.
86 Mayflower St., Mandaluyong City

4. This is a nationwide promo covering areas of the eighteen (18) business developers from Sarimanok Feeds Company, Inc.

5. All employees of Sarimanok/Univet, Unilab, hired agencies and relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity and affinity are disqualified from joining the promo.

6. Power Trio winners can choose from the following bloodlines: Sweater, Roundhead, Kelso, and Hatch.

7. In the monthly draw, there will be 106 winners and 423 consolation prizes to be given away.

1st Prize - Power Trio
2nd Prize - Conditioning Showcase
3rd Prize - Breeding Showcase
Consolation Prize - 12 Gift Packs

8. In the grand draw, there will be a total of 40 winners from all areas and 192 consolation prizes will be given away.

1st Prize - Power Trio
2nd Prize - Conditioning Showcase
3rd Prize - Breeding Showcase
Consolation Prize - 24 Gift Packs

9. Schedule for draws are as follows:

1st monthly draw - May 5, 2006
2nd monthly draw - June 9, 2006
Final Draw - July 7, 2006 186 Mayflower St., Mandaluyong City

10. A BFAD representative will be present during the monthly and grand draws.

11. The 1st prize winners' store partner will get P5,000 worth of Thunderbird products in the monthly draws, and P10,000 worth of Thunderbird products in the grand draw.

12. Non-winning entries will automatically qualify for the final draw.

13. Winners will be called and/or notified via mail.

14. Promo starts March 1, 2006 and ends on June 30, 2006.

Individuals below 18 years old are not qualified to join.



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(INQUIRIES AVAILABLE IN METRO MANILA)

Daming choices, itsang numero.